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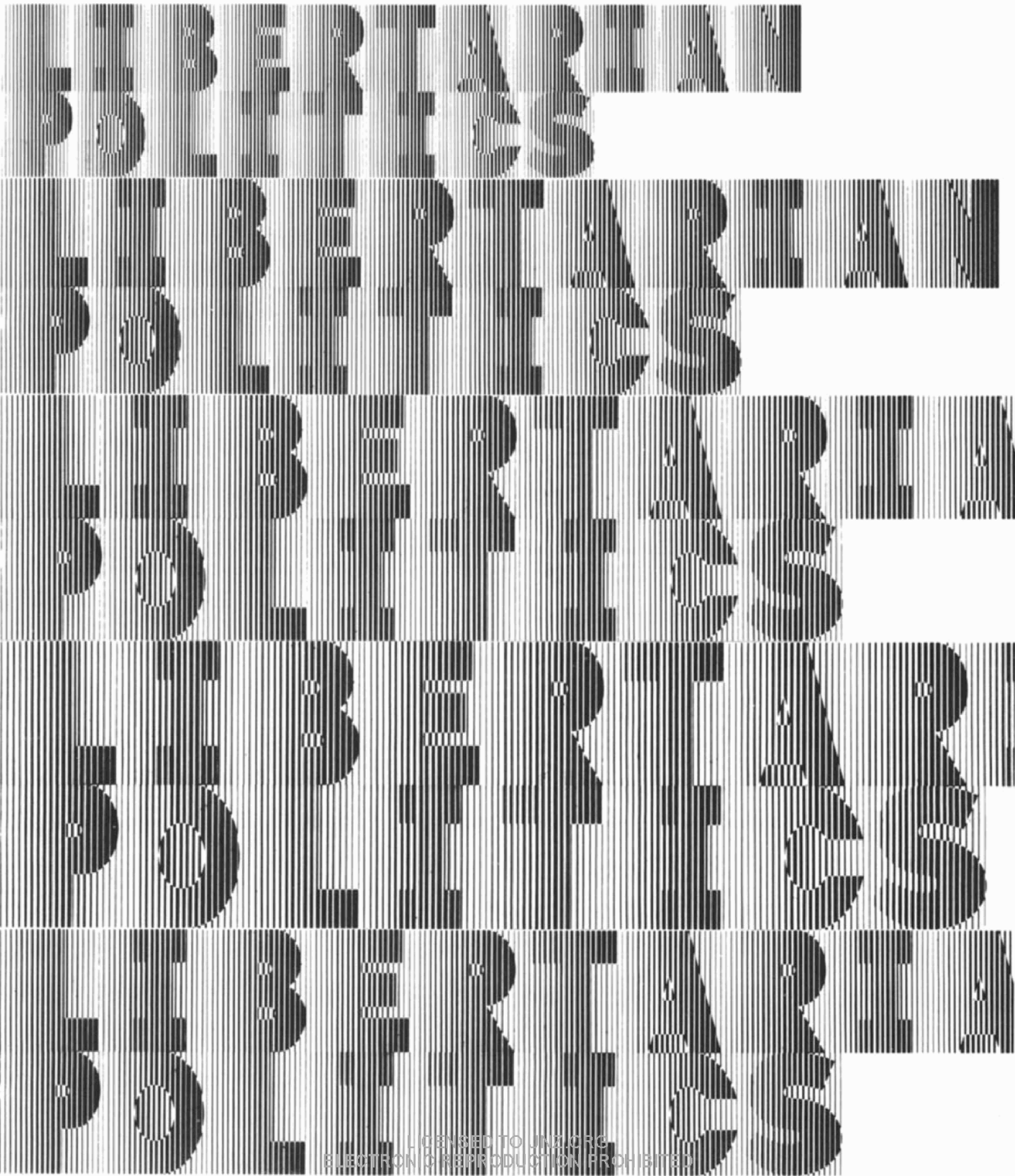

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Libertarian Politics:
An Interview with Steve Symms

To some advocates of freedom, the idea of libertarian politics seems a contradiction in terms. For politics, after all, inherently involves the use of organized force, rather than voluntary means, to accomplish various ends. Yet others point out that the only feasible way to dismantle the vast, inefficient federal bureaucracy is for enlightened representatives to vote out *what interventionist politicians have voted* in. *Hence, the case for a libertarian politics of deregulation, decontrol, and dismantling.*

One practitioner of this brand of politics is a first-term Congressman from Idaho, Steve Symms. As recently as early 1972 Symms was just a moderately successful apple grower and franchise operator in Caldwell, Idaho. He and his friends Ralph Smeed and Bob Smith collaborated on a local newsletter, THE IDAHO COMPASS, *which advanced libertarian, free-market solutions to state and local problems. Early in 1972, the three came up with the idea of a Congressional campaign as a way to gain exposure for their political ideas. Symms was selected as the most credible candidate, and entered the Republican primary, with the endorsement of the Libertarian Party. Shock number one for Symms was winning the primary; shock number two was winning election to the House of Representatives in November 1972.*

Once in Congress Symms faced the challenge of putting his philosophy into practice in the arena of wheeling, dealing, and compromise. He made an initial splash by introducing bills to end the prohibition on gold ownership and to end the Post Office monopoly on first class mail delivery. There followed a period of hard work, learning how the system works and learning what the home folks expect of a Congressman. In order to be reelected in 1974, Symms feels there are many local concerns he must attend to: farm problems, forest problems, Social Security problems, etc. In short, the life of a Congressman cannot be solely an ideological crusade, if he expects to last more than one term.

Symms has been criticized for being weak on civil liberties. Indeed, his positions on drugs and amnesty will not sit well with many libertarians. But it is also true that Congress *deals mainly with economic issues, and in this area Symms has been outspokenly on target. He has taken a strong, principled stand against wage and price controls, vowing not to rest until the Cost of Living Council is abolished. Despite his Republican affiliation, he has not hesitated to oppose the Administration, on issues ranging from revenue sharing to the energy crisis to Watergate. On foreign policy Symms has opposed U.S. intervention in the Middle East, and led the fight against aid to North Viet Nam. He opposes any granting of government credit to the Soviet Union (as in the grain fiasco). Recently Symms was one of five political figures honored by the National Taxpayers Union as friends of the taxpayer (along with Senators Byrd, Proxmire, and Roth, and Governor Walker of Illinois).*

Because of Symms' unique position, and the controversy over libertarian politics, REASON *was particularly interested in interviewing him. To conduct the interview we enlisted the aid of three key members of the Society for Individual Liberty: Don Ernsberger, a Ph.D. candidate in American economic history at Temple University, Dave Walter, an MBA candidate at Drexel University, and George Morrone, a student at Pierce Business College. What emerged from the interview will probably not change anyone's mind regarding the use of political means, but it provides an illuminating look at one man's efforts to use the political process for good.*

REASON: Since you've been identified with the conservative movement and with the libertarian movement, I was wondering if you could tell our readers a little about where you stand on the question of the proper role of government in society.

SYMMS: My basic position is that the proper role of government is to control the destructive forces of man. Meaning, the police force is the only place that they have any role. Anything that's creative, nondestructive, should be left up to the free thinking creation and competitive voluntary exchange of goods and services. That means that almost all the government that's going on here—I'm against. You establish yourself a negative voting record, of course, if you get in this position because there are very few things that you feel you can vote for but—I always refer to the guy that's living along the Mississippi River and the water's running through his living room and somebody comes in and asks him to say something good about water. He just can't. And it's the same story when you're in a flood of big government interventionism.

REASON: How do you view your role as a United States Congressman in advancing individual freedom in this country?

SYMMS: Of course that's a difficult question and as someone who is a student of the libertarian philosophy I know it's a bothersome thing, because by being here at all you're in the position of an agent to represent other people and pass laws and make decisions that have an effect on people's lives, and the more government we have, the less freedom we have. So I guess that my role in that would be to throw rocks in the progress of the bureaucracy—slow everything down—fight a holding action in Washington to hold off the tie to big government while the people like Leonard Read of FEE, Bob LeFevre at Rampart College, the late Baldy Harper from the Institute for Humane Studies, Murray Rothbard, George Roche III, and others can fight the battle on an educational level, because we have to win the battle *intellectually.* It's not just a political battle that we're going to win, but it's the thinking of the people and the rationale—the rekindling of the ideas of liberty. But while the intellectual battle is going on there is the real fact of life that if we turn our backs on politics, we may be in a police state before we have a chance to win the struggle intellectually. And you get some of these government programs going, which all abrogate freedom, and it's hard to stop them. So my role is just one rifle in the line you might say, just trying to fight back growing government here in Washington while other people can be out contributing in their individual way to win the battle on the intellectual level. This is a battle for the individual—my fate just happens to be here in Congress for now.

REASON: What is your opinion on the most important specific actions that could be taken here in Washington to expand individual liberties? What specific bills, or specific reforms would you suggest?

SYMMS: Well, I really think that one is the **private ownership of gold,** because of the inflated currency. And you know I've said this many times, and somebody before me said it, that the only two things the government has ever been able to do well is to wage war and inflate the currency. And I have said that on the floor of the House and I'm convinced that this is true—you know governments fight wars all over the world and they also inflate currency all over the world and all governments have been good at this and ours is no exception. So from that aspect right now, the number one thing that I think would help to establish more individual freedom would be to allow a person to buy gold so he can protect his own personal financial condition against bad government monetary policies. Allowing private citizens to own gold would be a built-in trigger mechanism for the politicians here in Washington since they don't have the discipline to put a lid on deficit spending.

We should also pass a **lump sum budget** at the beginning of the year and then not spend any more money than they take in. I've sponsored a bill and a constitutional amendment along this line that would actually require equal expenditure with input of money so that you couldn't have an inflated currency take place. The ownership of gold would bring about a more honest budgetary process because people in buying gold for protection from paper currency would force politicians to get the government's house in order.

Now the other thing is that I think some kind of a **war powers bill** would really be effective. I'm very interested in the Bricker amendment and there's two or three people who have submitted war powers bills which would actually limit the power of

"While the intellectual battle is going on, there is the real fact of life that if we turn our backs on politics, we may be in a police state before we have a chance to win intellectually."

the executive to go out and make a secret deal and make an arbitrary decision that this country's friendly and that one is unfriendly and then you start bombing on the unfriendly country and pretty quick you've got the U.S. involved in some kind of war and then you have to come back and Congress has to bail them out and keep going. What I would like to see is some kind of a time limit.

REASON: Many libertarians have been surprised that you do not favor immediate unconditional amnesty for draft evaders or immediate legalization of drugs. I wonder if you could explain to our readers why you think that now is not the time to make these two actions.

SYMMS: I know this bothers many people in the libertarian movement, when I have been touted as a libertarian; a more accurate description probably would be "student of libertarianism." I'm not sure that there are many libertarians in the practical world of politics. After all, politics itself is organized force of the majority. I think that, number one, on amnesty we can't avoid the fact that we're here now and we have had a very gruelling experience in Southeast Asia, and those who did go over there and didn't come back or lost arms and legs and gave up time and went through all of the harrassment, whether it was right or wrong, they were a victim of circumstances. Because of those people, I think granting general amnesty flies in the face of reality for them. That's my first reason. But on the other hand, just to say no amnesty ever, I think that's wrong. I think that the reason we have the amnesty problem, of course, is that of very wishy washy

"The only way you can stop some of the arrogant activist regulatory agencies is to starve them."

government foreign policy, and lack of commitment of whether or not we need to be in Vietnam. So that's why I'm not a hard liner against it, but I just think that now is a very improper time, because of the other people. Now as individuals they're welcome to come back and face trial but it might surprise a lot of people how many of them might not want to come back. Another reason is my background: a well-disciplined family, football in college, and three years in the Marine Corps. At one point in my life I was more of a red-necked conservative politically and I still have some of these tendencies left.

The other question you asked was about the legalization of drugs. I think that it's very easy for a libertarian to take the position that until we know more about drug abuse and usage and whether or not it's gregarious—whether or not you actually draw more people into the problem, to take drugs with you to enjoy the thing—I think that until I have those things answered I don't want to make it any easier for people. And here's why I say that. I've never talked to an alcoholic who ever wanted to get anybody else involved in alcohol. But I've talked to many people who use drugs in some fashion or another who are always encouraging people to join in the habit with them. Now whether they do this because of economic reasons or because they want someone to be with them on a drug trip or something, I don't know, and until I know more about it I don't think we should make it easier.

The other reason is that we have so many

regulations on people in this country—you're regulated as to what time you can go to work, as to how much you can get piad, how many hours you can work, to all kinds of restrictions on safety—every kind of a possible restrictive regulation you can think of is put upon people. So what I'm saying is that the politicians drive a man to drink and then pass one more law against drinking. We've driven some people to drugs because they can find an escape in drugs and get freedom and until we can start letting up on the economic restrictions on mankind it would be premature to just let the whole drug thing go without also deregulating the economic part. Now if we abolish all laws that deal with economics, you know, completely open our economy of free wheeling, get that started, then I think that would be the time that we could just forget about some laws that dealt with just personal self-abuse. I just think that if we can get the economy freed up so that people can kind of do their own thing and be free with their own personal kind of economy, then the moral thing would be less of an issue and let the churches and the personal individuals take care of their own problems, then I'd be more willing to do it. But that's, I think, a very sound position as far as libertarians are concerned.

REASON: What is your view on abortion? Do you think that it is a state's rights question as many conservatives do?

SYMMS: Well, I've never seen a pregnant state. So in my judgment that ducks the issue. Some conservatives propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States guaranteeing the right to life to the unborn, the ill, the aged or the incapacitated. This is the Right to Life Amendment. That's kind of hard to argue with. Some of the liberals have one that's just the opposite, that says you have the right to take the life of an unborn and an aged—just the exact opposite. I said I'd vote against all of them because I don't know the answer, I don't think that government intervention is going to help; abortion is a problem that has to be solved by the mother and the father and the doctor, you know, and hopefully the good Lord over that. And to have the Congress get into it isn't going to make it any better. We pass a law today and say that you can't have an abortion and then ten years from now we can probably have the right to say that you will have one after the third child or something. I don't believe in that either. And so this is a tough thing you know. Just oppose all of them, vote against them all.

REASON: The Food and Drug Administration has recently issued a new set of regulations effective in January prohibiting the sale over the counter of vitamins over a certain level of dosage and in certain combinations. What is your reaction to that?

SYMMS: Well, I am supporting Congressman Hosmer's bill which would stop the Food and Drug Administration from being able to do that. I think it's typical of the FDA—I think they're wrong in doing it, but I think what bothers me more than just this issue is the activism that I see on the part of the regulatory agencies here, where they're actively trying to put their nose in other people's business. And the only way you can stop some of the arrogant activist regulatory agencies, which have become dictatorial, rather than regulatory, is to starve them. These people are shielded from the Congress because they're on Civil Service. You can't fire them. I've been involved in a lot of scraps with regulatory agencies already and you just can't imagine the arrogance—now not all of them but I see the regulatory agencies as one of the biggest single threats to freedom. You know they're just about immune from their Congress. From my observations of developments of recent weeks, I'm not sure that the Executive Branch is capable of knowing what it's doing. I'm not sure that this Watergate thing is all bad, as it may teach people that Washington, D.C. is not the place to come to solve your problems. It may help us, because Rome fell when all the roads led to Rome and all roads lead to Washington now.

REASON: Now that you've mentioned Watergate, would you agree with the observation that Watergate may be healthy in the sense that it's healthy to build a basic distrust of bureaucracy and government in Washington?

SYMMS: Yes. I've said that publicly in Idaho. That it isn't all necessarily bad in my judgment. As a practicing Republican it's not necessarily politically great—it's not a political plus for me to be a member of Congress in the Republican Party and involved in the Republican Party structure here to have this in my party. But it's kind of interesting—I have to give credit to the *WASHINGTON POST* for their job in uncovering it—but it's kind of interesting that in the Bobby Baker and Walter Jenkins and Billy Sol Estes and all these other scandals that we had in past Administrations, they kind of whitewashed them and shoved them under the table. But now, when you do have an effort being made, visibly anyway, to try to cut government expenditures in certain areas, this thing is just blown out of proportion.

You know, I don't have any sympathy for anybody that's involved in it. If they're guilty I say they've got to face the music and the truth goes a long ways in politics. The quicker it comes out the better. I hope that it weakens the Executive Branch of the government, because the Congress has for too long sat down here and handed over the power to the President. And they talk about it down here but when the vote comes up, like on wage/price controls, they hand it over to the President. The vote on the gold thing—you see we had 162 to 162 on gold but then they voted the President power to give the

people the right to own gold when *he* thinks it's all right. Which may be never under the present Administration.

"Sometimes I vote with only four or five people–there's a lot of people who would like to vote the same way I do, but are afraid to."

REASON: Do you think there's any chance at all for gold legalization?

SYMMS: It's still alive because of the 162-162 vote here—the argument is still alive. So I'm hoping that somehow maybe we'll be able to get a concession from the Administration. Unfortunately most of these people seem to think that this would completely upset the American economy. I don't believe that. The Japanese have the right to own gold and they have a very strong currency and it is not backed by gold. But you can still buy gold in Japan. But it does make the Japanese politicians be more honest and it would do the same thing here.

REASON: Were you disappointed that several well-known conservative Congressmen did not show up for that vote? I was looking down the list and I saw Barry Goldwater, Jr. wasn't there and a couple of the other people—I don't recall their names—

SYMMS: Yes. I was really disappointed. In fact I was disappointed that some of the people who I have a great high regard for here in Congress, who are conservatives, voted against it, because they are "corpuscle conservatives" and don't quite understand what the *freedom* issue is all about.

REASON: What Congressional reforms do you support?

SYMMS: It's time the Congress started having tighter control of things and less Executive power. No question about that. The Congress does reflect the people, heck you know, everybody thinks that the House jobs ought to be four years instead of two. I'm against that. I think if we want to do anything to help things down here we'd make the Senate run every two years. We've got too much politics, that I know. And something needs to be done about all the money that's being expended on politics, but I don't have any answer to it and this idiotic campaign practices law that they've got is just another bureaucratic bunch of red tape and garbage. It's hard to fill out the forms and difficult to administer and probably anybody who wants to get around it can do it anyway. These guys here in the House are somewhat responsive to the people and they reflect—this is what frightens me about the whole thing—they really do reflect what people think and that's why it's so important that people like you are educating—publishing *SIL NEWS* and *REASON* Magazine. That's why I endorse these projects so much because they can get their message out, because a lot of times the stuff being asked for down here is socialistic and fascist, you know, some form of interventionism—but the people think they want it. That's what the people are telling Congress to do. Businessmen are down here testifying for wage and price controls because they don't know how to fight with big monopolistic labor unions—monopolies granted by government. They want to have the government be the third party in the collective bargaining process.

REASON: As a freshman Congressman you've met a lot of new people down here—and we're wondering about your impressions of the people who make up the United States Congress. Do you find very many who are really interested in the principles of liberty and individual rights, or do you think that most Congressmen essentially are down here looking for some pork barrel project for their district?

SYMMS: One of the brighter things about my experience here so far is to find out how many people seem to welcome me here with my ideas and how many people share these same concerns and ideas. And I'm certainly not alone down here. I find that sometimes I vote with only four or five people—but there's a lot of people who would like to vote the same way I do but are afraid to in a certain sense because of their district, because of the political implication of it. But there is a movement here and it's alive and well kicking right here in Congress. We're trying to develop better and more positive positions so that we can articulate the free market idea of the libertarian philosophy and I think that we're making great strides and great headway, and we've got a lot more friends here than we realized. I have found this all through my campaign that there are people all over hiding in the woodwork that think this way, but they're waiting for somebody to come out and say it. So I'm encouraged in that regard now. Of course, I don't know everybody here in Congress yet. Most of the people I do know well are the conservatives—it's just natural that those are the people I get acquainted with first. But my acquaint-

"I think politically the House of Representatives is really the right place for libertarians to zero in on."

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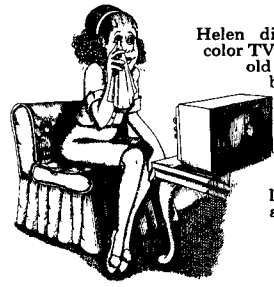

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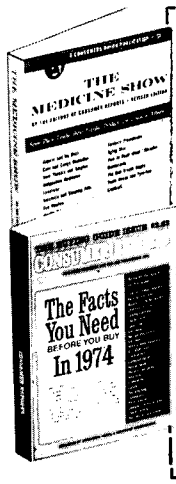

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ance is broadening and I find in a lot of areas that I can get along very well with many of the liberals. It's interesting to notice on some of the votes that you have ultra-liberals and ultra-conservatives voting the same way—not on all of them but on some of them and that's an indication of the trend.

I think that the greatest thing we have going for us is that all of the collectivist social programs are failures. And the general public out there knows it. And a lot of interventionists are afraid to go out and talk for more government and more socialism because it's not working that well. And so that's a plus factor with somebody who's interested in running an antigovernment campaign and I hope people run antigovernment campaigns all over this country. If we had 218 votes down here we'd change a lot of this stuff and I think it wouldn't necessarily mean that we'd have to upset the economy. We've got a horrible bureaucracy, it's just about impossible to stop, but it's got to be stopped right in this House. Stop the funding of a lot of these projects—open end funding should be stopped—you might have to have an extension of a program for one year so they can wrap it up and finish it and then don't refund it the next year. Things could be changed right here if we just had more help here.

And I think politically the House of Representatives is really the right place for libertarians to zero in on. If you get a libertarian in the job say of Governor of a state, or President or something—then you would have to take the oath that it's your responsibility to make the government work and then immediately your responsibilities are different than the guy who's here in Congress who's trying to slow down the process of the growth of the government. His responsibilities are a little different and it's a much better place for a guy that has a strong philosophical viewpoint to be.

REASON: Do you think a representative should be responsible to the wishes of his constituents? In other words, should he take a poll on an issue and vote the way the majority of them think, or should a Congressman be his own man?

SYMMS: Well, first off, I don't think there's anything wrong with a Congressman reflecting the thinking of his people. It's a little hard to criticize that—there's a hang-up in representative government. But I believe the responsibility for the vote is mine and no matter what, when I have to enter a vote the people out in Idaho can't vote. I have to make a judgment and vote on it, considering what they want and what I think is best and so forth. There's no question on how I am going to vote on the basis of how I campaigned. So the only votes that I have to go back and explain are when I vote *yes* for something. Because they got the impression that I was going to vote against everything, and once in a while I have voted for something because it seemed like under the circumstances that certain programs were maybe half completed and beneficial to the district and so I voted for two or three things.

REASON: What's your opinion of the Penn Central mess?

SYMMS: The government caused the whole thing and the quicker the government gets out of the way the quicker we will have a solution. You know, the government gave them the land for the railroads originally and then they decided that they ought to tell them what time the train ran and how many firemen to have on board and what the schedule was going to be and how much to charge and what time, you know, the whole thing, so we just regulated them out of business.

REASON: Isn't the answer just to get the government out of the way and let the free market solve problems?

SYMMS: That's the best answer for most problems and that's my basic position for most everything. Now I did say earlier that if the government would get their nose out of everything they shouldn't be in, then they could do the things they should be in. I'm not against good law enforcement and things like that, even though I like Murray Rothbard's approach to "free-market" justice. I think most people favor that and realize that we're going to have to have some form of structure. I think our founding fathers felt that way. And I think Jefferson was quite libertarian in his outlook in his early years . . .

REASON: Until he became President.

"I don't have the problem of wanting to be President . . . I'm down here to try to work myself out of a job."

SYMMS: I think when he became President he became involved in power—I don't have the problem that many young Congressmen have about wanting to be President—that's not one of my aims. I'm like Ludwig von Mises—if I were given all that power I'd want to abdicate it. You know, I'm down here to try to work myself out of a job—that's my aim. What I came here for was to try to reduce government, and it's just like Goldwater said—"Reduce government, don't streamline it, don't try to make it more efficient, just reduce it." Most government reorganization doesn't even make it any better. The Forest Service is something that I've been very involved with, they have control of vast acreage in Idaho. Well

one of the things that was brought to my mind in their recent reorganization is that the forest in Albuquerque, New Mexico is now under the jurisdiction of the Atlanta office, and there's no similarity in the type of forest management required in Georgia and in New Mexico. Now 400 miles away is the Denver office and to me Denver would be more practical than Atlanta. I would just hope that we would somehow finish up with more technical people in the field managing forests and less in the offices managing paper. I hope it really ends up that way but a lot of times government reorganization is like von Steuben talking to the troops at Valley Forge. He told them he had some good news and some bad news. The good news was that they all got a change of underwear, and the bad news was that "Jones, you change with Brown, and Thomas, you change with Smith." This is why I'm really skeptical of government reorganization. Another bill that I'm sponsoring is the Post Office Bill that will permit independent companies to compete for first class mail. Yes. That would just permit anybody to compete with the Post Office. And that's the way to do it. I'm against going out here to try to sell the Post Office to General Motors; that would be a mistake. Leave the Post Office right where it is. The founding fathers made a mistake when they put the Post Office as part of the government. They knew the letters needed to be delivered so they put it in the government. They didn't know about radios, so they couldn't get those in the government. And they didn't know about airplanes, so they couldn't get those in the government. And look what happened to those things, but in the Post Office the letter system is just being bogged down and until they made it a monopoly, most of the mail was carried by private people.

REASON: What can people who are members of the Society for Individual Liberty, or readers of *REASON* Magazine, do to help you in your job of tearing down bureaucracy and reducing the size of the government?

SYMMS: Well, I think, number one is to intellectually arm themselves and continue on their studies. I consider myself a student and I think that if we can all remain intellectually armed we can fight the battle wherever it is, whether it's one on one, two on one, or whether I'm down here in Congress where I'm able to be in a position to possibly have a greater impact, although you know down here I'm debating with people who already have a very strong point of view and everybody's so busy in Congress that it's hard to continue a study course and actually be in a state of inquiry. I think to be effective we've got to learn not to offend everybody just because a guy maybe doesn't agree with you about everything right down the line, but don't give up on him, view everybody as a possible convert—look at it like a missionary does, everybody's an unsaved soul and we're going to win them over. That's the first thing. The other thing is that I think there are two battles—there's an intellectual battle and there's a practical political battle and there's a lot of power out here in the marketplace in business and so forth. So I'm not going to say that I advocate for everybody to get into politics, but if a person's inclined to do this, I wouldn't discourage him from getting into politics—you know, something like Young Republicans, a good group, or the Libertarian Party. I think you can be in the Libertarian Party and still be in the Republican Party, because

"What we have to change is the rancid intellectual soil that keeps cropping up with these collectivist ideas."

in fact in many cases it's almost impossible to get on the ballot unless you're in the Republican or Democratic Party. You just can't get on the ballot in a state like Idaho, they've got almost any other party shut off, with the ways the laws are, so you have to be a little practical about that. But I wouldn't back away from getting involved with Young Republicans. I go speak to a lot of Young Republican conventions, and I always talk about libertarianism. I'm going to speak in Milwaukee tomorrow to the Wisconsin Young Republicans in Madison, and I'll tell them about Leonard Read, FEE, SIL. Arm themselves intellectually so they can go out and fight this battle and win it on the basis of principle. Get your own set of principles worked out that you believe in and that you can live with and that you can articulate, and whether it's a bus driver you're talking to or whoever, try not to offend him but keep him in a state of inquiry, arouse his curiosity, hand them *REASON* or a Leonard Read booklet, depending on where their intellectual interest is. I like Henry Hazlitt's *ECONOMICS IN ONE LESSON*—I carry it with me. This

thing has got more practical answers in it for some of these things—you know when somebody wants to know why you take this position you can refer to this book and it really has some good and practical ideas.

REASON: You could use Hazlitt's book in floor debates in the House whenever somebody mentions a cliche about government action.

SYMMS: But it's got to be part of an overall effort, like I said at the beginning—there's also an educational effort, there's an individual effort that has to be done. And if only freedom were as easy to obtain as buying insurance, well then the problem would be easy. Baldy Harper wrote me a letter during my campaign to the effect that if freedom were like fire insurance it probably would be easy, but it's much more complicated than that. If freedom becomes second nature to you, you understand when you hear something bad that it's another collectivist idea coming out of rancid intellectual soil. That's what we have to change in the long run, is that that rancid intellectual soil that keeps cropping up with these collectivist ideas. And that's the problem that I run into down here. I think we're making headway and this Congress down here is better than the last one was in numbers of people who think this way. Not the leadership, but in total numbers. The process that takes place here, it takes time for the leadership to evolve and if we can change seventy people every year and keep the new group coming in thinking like the group that came in this year you'd see a change in this place pretty fast. It would just take about two more elections with the change of seventy people coming in—you'd find that there would be a lot less government programs coming out of here.

REASON: So you'd like to see more SIL members sitting next to you in Congress?

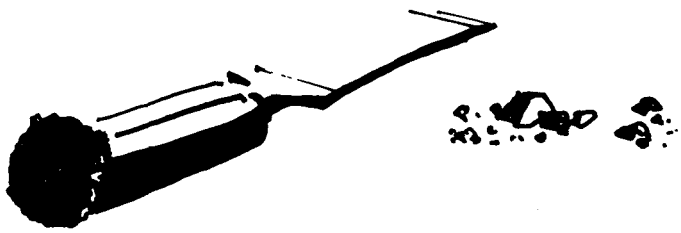
SYMMS: Right. I'd be tickled to death.

REASON: Do you expect to be back here? With the problems in your district?

SYMMS: I think that I'll have a tough race on my hands. I mean the practical reality of it is we have a very popular Democratic Governor and the district I come from is a Democrat stronghold in Idaho and we have Senator Frank Church, and he's going to be running and of course he's going to be a formidable candidate. So I'm going to be running opposite a popular governor who's seeking reelection and a three term senator seeking his fourth term reelection and I'm going to be running on the opposite ticket. If they get a good Congressional candidate to run on the Democratic ticket, well maybe the reality of my reelection is sure no cinch. We're trying very hard to take care of the constituent problems that we have—you know the nuts and bolts things that if people don't get their Social Security check or something through no fault of theirs (and there's a lot of that that has to be done as a Congressman)—and we're trying to do all of it we can. I'm working on a lot of problems—land management, forest service problems, infestations and things that really pertinently deal to Idaho and I think we're doing a pretty good job. Whether we get reelected it's hard to tell. I wouldn't bet on it. We'll just wait and see I guess. There's no such thing as a cinch.

REASON: Well, thank you very much.

SYMMS: You bet. ◻



THEY ARE NOT LONG

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

Ernest Dowson

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- AN INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT NGUYEN VAN THIEU
- UNION TERRORISM RAGES THROUGH NATION
- DEATH PENALTY ISSUE IS STILL ALIVE
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Against Sex Education—A Letter to The Humanist

Ralph Raico

THE HUMANIST
4244 Ridge Lea Rd.
Amherst, NY 14226

People:

The view of sex education presented in the interview with Mary Calderone (your issue of May/June 1973) is, to say the least, rather familiar to your readers. I wonder if you would permit me to offer a contrasting opinion, also from a humanist standpoint?

The position I want to set forth is that sex education in tax-supported government schools should not be allowed under present conditions, even where a majority of parents in a school district may favor it. The arguments I will use in no way depend on Biblical or supernatural support, nor do they point to the notion that sex is sinful, Man depraved, etc., etc. This deserves comment.

One of the major reasons for the success of the sex education idea in recent years is that its proponents have been able to stereotype the enemies of sex education in the public schools in a way very flattering and reassuring to their own liberal self-image. These enemies are invariably seen as John Birchers (p. 8 of Dr. Calderone's interview), hopelessly sexually repressed, perhaps the victims of incipient mental illness (cf. her reference to "paranoia"). In supporting sex education, one certifies one's own relatively emancipated attitudes towards sex and one's own mental health in comparison to these pretty *sick* types.

Of course the Birchers and their allies are against sex education; *of course* there are attacks on it (such as the ones reviewed by Lester A. Kirkendall in the same issue) published in places like Nashville, Tennessee and Fullerton, California. But how is it that Kirkendall neglected to mention a much more significant attack, *OH! SEX EDUCATION!*, by Mary Breasted, a graduate of Radcliffe and the Columbia School of Journalism and a writer for *THE VILLAGE VOICE?* Focussing on the right-wing opponents, (really, why bother using up a third of a page *listing* them?) is a propaganda trick (highly effective, it turns out), neatly defining any possible *"left-wing"* opposition out of existence. And yet I recall Paul Goodman's reply when I asked him what he thought of the issue (this was on the one occasion I was lucky enough to meet that beautiful man): that there shouldn't be *sex education* in the schools, there should be *sex!* Why is it so difficult for the average educated person to realize that it is possible to direct an attack on Calderone's views from a libertarian and anarchist position, seeing them as one more dreary and dangerous try at social engineering on the part of bureaucratic liberals? Let me attempt to show that that is in fact what it is.

We should be grateful to Dr. Calderone for admitting that in her conception sex education is to be a part of moral education, that schools "must deal with moral values—it's immoral not to!" (p. 10.) Too often this issue is brushed aside with the claim that what is to be imparted are solely "the facts," on the basis of which children and older students will make their own decisions. But if there is to be a "moral education . . . in which sex education is but a part," obviously the question comes up: Whose moral principles will be promoted here? Evidently, they will not be the principles of the majority of Americans, as witness the following:

> **Kurtz:** Who really needs sexual education?
> **Calderone:** The adults.
> **Kurtz:** Who in particular?
> **Calderone:** Well, really everybody. [p. 10.]

Well, whose values then? In the interview, the idea is put forward that it will be the students' *own* principles that will be discovered and creatively developed in the course of sex education:

> **Kurtz:** How do we cope with [the problem of talking about moral values in the context of sex education]?
> **Calderone:** I think that Lawrence Kohlberg's method is pretty good—the Socratic method of dialogue . . .
> **Kurtz:** This would eliminate the problem of the teacher imposing his own moral standards . . . [p. 9.]

(Incidentally, am I the only one who noticed the rich irony here? Has either Kurtz or Calderone ever *read* a Socratic dialogue? It is fairly obvious, in *those* "rap-sessions," who it is who decides what conclusions are going to be arrived at!) But, in point of fact, Dr. Calderone has a particular ethic of her own which she believes will typically be realized through

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"The Socratic method"; to Kurtz's question, "But is the task of sexual education for adults to . . . develop some responsibility or some restraint which is self-imposed?" she replies:

> Certainly, You have to. You can't go around sleeping with everybody. [Note the phrase; she repeats it a little later on: "people sleeping around all over the place . . ."] . . . You see, the beautiful thing about having a group of 15-year-olds in a room rapping about something is that there will always be a proponent of sexual freedom and there will also be a conservative . . . . But then there is that larger group that begins to swing with the thinking process *[sic!]* and identifies some of the absurdities, inequities, inconsistencies, and hypocrisies of the whole adult world and, of course, of either extreme. And so there is safety in this, a balance wheel. [p. 12.]

This is entirely in keeping with Ms. Breasted's finding, that Dr. Calderone "advocated a sex education that was basically a form of moral indoctrination," and that in practice, in the Anaheim, California Family Life program, for example, such education was almost entirely "devoted to lessons in problem solving *within* the context of the conventional morality."

Thus, Calderone's values are, to my mind, only very superficially "liberated." Yes, yes, she condemns the sex attitudes of St. Paul and St. Augustine—as if these were really significant for the present and future (when, I wonder, are you going to publish a scathing denunciation of the *absolutely crucial* doctrine of infant damnation?); for the rest, however, her values are conventional-liberal ones. She lets the mask slip revealingly far on occasion, as when she speaks of ". . . if a girl gets raped *or* if a child has a homosexual experience. People survive these things very well" (p. 12, emphasis added), giving us a good idea of where she is at by her equation of the two; or when she states, of laws regarding consensual relations among adults: "This is ridiculous *because* many of the churches approve of oral-genital sex between consenting adults" (p. 12, emphasis added). She is against "sleeping around" and "exploitation" in sex (both undefined), and in favor of more "research" and more "knowledge," to be contributed by various "experts," including clergymen and theologians (I personally find her assumption that there is something "exciting" about the new recognition of sex on the part of the United Methodist Church or the United Presbyterian Church repulsive). She is for the proliferation of "professionals" whose job will be to "capacitate" the sex drive of other people. All in all, a program for a liberal-positivist-bureaucratic remolding of American sexual and social values.

But even this is describing it too favorably, if we consider what sex education is likely to be *in actual practice.* It will, in most cases, be carried out by the graduates of our state teachers colleges, middle- and lower middle-class types, with their own distinctive values, fears, etc., on the subject. If you want to see what sort of people will be in reality undertaking to shape the sexual attitudes of the young, go to Buffalo State or Fredonia (or, as Ms. Breasted did, to Long Beach State). Dr. Calderone's reply would probably be: But *these* people will in turn be educated, their sexual hang-ups resolved, etc., before they are turned loose on American children. In my view, such a response would betray again the liberal's wild over-estimation of the effect of "education" in comparison to life. The public school teachers, after all their college English courses, have succeeded in making poetry an object of hatred and disgust to millions of their subjects; why should they now be allowed to have a go at sex?

Furthermore, there are political reasons why sex education should not be permitted in the public schools, based on the existence of compulsory school attendance laws and use of tax money (by definition, money taken by force). In the present circumstances, a sex education program would be an imposition upon a captive audience of a process designed either to change or to reinforce certain sexual values, the whole thing being paid for by money taken also from those who disapprove of those values. Pending the abolition of the government's quasi-monopoly of primary and secondary education (through something like Milton Friedman's voucher plan) and the repeal of compulsory school attendance laws, sex education courses in the public schools are a totalitarian infrigement of individual rights. Such programs should be dismantled or not allowed to come into effect. Let kids find out about sex to the degree they individually wish from books, but best of all at parties, in bars, in johns, when their parents are out, in cars, at the beach under the boardwalk, from older women and men, and even in the liberals' version of hell, "the gutter."

Last of all, let me put in a good word for the Birchers. I share very few values with them and I look on a society controlled by them with almost as much alarm as the much more probable one of the future, where the likes of Dr. Calderone and her "experts" will call the tune. But, when all is said and done, they *are* aware of something which Calderone refuses to acknowledge and on account of which she hints at their mental illness: just as these same sorts, when they talk of "Rockefeller control" of American foreign policy, see *something* the liberals don't, so they are by no means utterly unrealistic when they shriek that there is a plot afoot to take their children away from them and remake them in an image which they hate. Why, on top of it all, *they* should be *forced to fund* this plan, is best known to those whose whole social art consists in coercing and manipulating people into doing what they don't want to do. ◻

Political philosophy relies heavily on philosophy's other branches. By "political" I mean whatever falls within the purview of activities people perform that pertain to their basic social and legal arrangements, institutions, procedures and the like.

In the realm of politics the most crucial act is a *decision.* Decisions in politics necessarily imply consequences for all in a community—so while we might not need to care much about the character of others' decisions pertinent to their own, private affairs, we *must* concern ourselves with how decisions are made within the political arena. Decisions we make have a lot to do with how we *think*—what we permit to enter as facts capable of influencing our decisions, what we focus upon as we come to a decision. That much seems to be clear—even if at times a decision must be reached in a fraction of a second. Sometimes we rely on very well entrenched dispositions, ones built up slowly, throughout our lives—reflexes, habits, mannerisms, etc. But whenever possible, in important issues we shy away from these—or, at least, we *ought* to, if we expect to act successfully, to promote the best available solution to a problem. My question concerns the overall quality of political decisions in this political society and why it is what it is.

Many believe in the potency of philosophy for determining the overall quality of a culture. Some say that psychology has much more to do with it—while yet others maintain that both of the above are factors to contend with. If indeed whatever element in a person's character carrying determining force is a *psychological* factor, then philosophy has a lot to do with people's psychology—it provides the rationale for the various alternative modes of dealing with the world. Existentialism, Buddhism, Christianity, Marxism, Skepticism and so forth are all expressions of ordinary conclusions in people's lives, in their intellectual, systematic formulation—contending for a world view. People and their philosophy serve as mutually reinforcing components in their lives, although we must begin with *people.* They, ultimately, call the important shots, since they are the agents who produce philosophy. Still, by focusing on the dominant philosophical atmosphere one can both *assess* the culture and *explain* its features—thereby predicting, to some extent, its *directions.*

There is no doubt that political decisions reflect certain accepted philosophical principles which run rampant through our society. Most formi-

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dable of these is the conclusion that moral problems *cannot* be managed rationally, that questions about what one ought to do *must* ultimately be answered by reference to feelings or biases or prejudices or inspirations or instincts or how one was raised, etc. That means that political decisions rest not on reason but on anything *but* reason. *The politics of non-rationality*—an apt characterization of our times. By considering what factors seem to count in how politicians select from alternatives, what motivates people in their voting habits, how they talk to each other about political goals, principles, values—freedom, justice, security, welfare—and how unable they are to distinguish the political from that which doesn't concern it, all this points to the irrational character of political decisions.

"There are signs today that the mainstream of philosophy is improving; yet a lot of it is useless and even rotten."

Richard M. Nixon once wrote (in *SIX CRISES*) that he hates indecisiveness; a decision must be reached even if it is the wrong one. While in the private realm one might not care about this, *in politics* there are objections: Nixon's decision must be well guarded against mistake for it may have drastic consequences for us all. The point is not that the people are impotent to produce the right decision but that, by virtue of what is being decided, some decisions cannot be the decisions of everyone; they aren't in the favored position to decide.

Many political decisions are bad simply because they *cannot* be good. It really makes no difference what I decide while doing surgery if I am unqualified to make the decision in the first place! And for the kinds of decisions politicians must now make they are simply unqualified—they shouldn't be theirs to make. But to admit that would require resignation, literally. The force of this conclusion depends on having a view of decisions: there is a difference between good and bad ones and there are standards which one can use to assess them. If one hasn't got these standards at least *accessible,* he has no business being in a position to make the decisions.

Philosophers have, for the last sixty-odd years, been telling the world that decisions about what is right or wrong cannot be handled rationally—there cannot be standards about such issues, there cannot be *reasonable* agreement about such issues as war, free speech, conscription, foreign aid, taxation, public beaches, compulsory education, etc. All these pertain to politics and all are said, by many philosophers, to be outside the realm of reason, science, the knowable.

If one wants to understand something about the character of our political life, he needs to take account of the character of our intellectual life. And that is something philosophy expresses most emphatically, at its fundamental level, at its foundations.

There is good and bad and mediocre philosophy—just as anything else. As an activity of people, it has a basic goal more or less diligently pursued by those who practice it—the professors, in this case, teaching and writing at colleges and universities. There are today signs that the mainstream of philosophy—its central dominant, prominent currents—is improving; yet a lot of it is useless and even rotten. This shouldn't come as a shock—all sorts of other fields suffer from similar problems, e.g., medicine, construction, baseball, sociology, etc. And the arts, of course, suffer too. In some areas, people spot this quickly—and run to government to give us useless consumer protection; with philosophy, as well as the other academic fields, the protection must be generated elsewhere (which should be the case for other consumer protection as well, if it is to work).

But most readers know something about the misguided features of philosophy as a human activity. The most severe is the systematic attempt to divorce thinking from reality, the mind from the world, reason from emotion, knowledge from facts. In philosophy these emerge as the analytic/synthetic, theory/practice, ideal/real, ends/means, conceptual/empirical, necessary/contingent and other "technical" distinctions, all of which contribute, at least in many instances, to a philosophical world view that the mind is a weird sort of thing in the world, at odds with nature, in conflict with feelings, unable to know things, unable to formulate plans that work, dreaming in a heaven while reality is rushing past. This view is old and widely known.

One problem many will call to mind is that an attempt to appraise philosophy itself raises a philosophical problem: by what standard are we to judge philosophy? The answer *must* be: *how it contributes to human life.* The proposition that this *isn't* the standard leads to such absurdities that for anyone interested in life and improving it the alternative is irrelevant. If philosophy cannot contribute to human life, then it is useless, pointless, a waste of effort and, as a profession, a fraud. (My task here does not permit the full justification of the standard I am using. I take it, however, that my readers are familiar enough with certain philosophical positions, and find them convincing, so that for them justifying the value of human life would amount to being redundant.)

The point now needs to be made: philosophy is improving. Those looking for hope might well gain encouragement from that alone—even if the effects won't come for some time. In the last few years, following the dominance of analytic philosophy and various, sometimes perverse, versions of

Existentialism, many philosophers have undertaken to rethink their most basic dogmas. What I will do is point to some efforts within contemporary philosophy which have contributed successfully to the task of justifying the primacy of the value of human life and political freedom. Few of those efforts had that aim directly in mind, for it clearly is not fashionable—some think it *wrong*—to advocate values as comprehensive as that, at least not explicitly and boldly. Academic philosophy is all too self-conscious of strictures laid down earlier this century: deal with concrete, small problems, even when you have in mind larger ones. (And when you reflect on the most prominent schools of the 19th century, mostly varieties of idealism, this caution is not without its merits.)

"It clearly is not fashionable to advocate values as comprehensive as human life and political freedom."

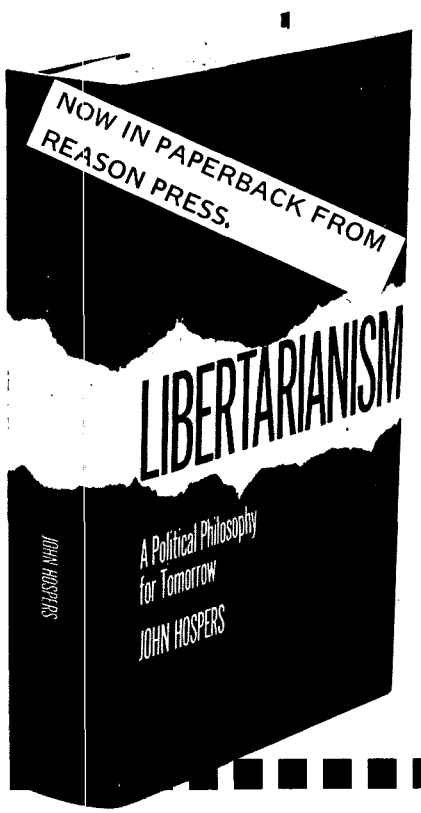
I will give a brief, but-hopefully-informative, report on the state of the field, appropriate to a magazine format. I shall not provide the reader with exact references because most of the people I will mention are listed in directories of philosophers, periodical indexes, and even the newsletters of book services well known to readers of this magazine. (I will be glad to answer specific questions, by mail.)

* * *

REALITY OUT OF FOCUS

The field of study which is designed to get a clear grasp of existence as such, metaphysics, has been under constant attack for more than two centuries. David Hume proposed a theory of knowledge that rendered it impossible to understand reality in general. Hume's analysis of human understanding must, however, be understood to have been prompted by the philosophical and theological trends he was attempting to scrutinize. Before Hume, Descartes made the first move toward rendering reality as such inaccessible to human knowledge. For Descartes it was the human mind alone that could be apprehended directly. This doctrine of the *prior certainty of consciousness*—the idea that we first knew the faculty or instrument of knowledge, before we could grasp reality, the object of knowledge—set the stage for virtually all of subsequent Western philosophy.

The case for "the idea whose time has come" . . .



LIBERTARIANISM

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The main victim of the Cartesian doctrine was metaphysics. Since the human mind is the only thing known to us for certain, reality, and its most basic principles or facts, would have to be deduced from what we know of the human mind. Hume merely elaborated on this basic doctrine, changing it considerably but not altering its basic point that we know first of all the nature of mind, and only then, *perhaps,* reality. With his theory that all knowledge must be made accountable to the sense impressions received by us, it became impossible to get out of our own neads, so to speak. The ultimate results, skepticism and solipsism, were admitted by Hume.

Kant tried to recover part of the world—at least the part that made its appearance *via* the senses. But in the process he announced that knowledge of reality itself is not possible because the constituents of the human mind serve as "colored lenses," forever hiding what reality *really is.* Subsequent philosophical trends never recovered from this denial of the possibility of knowing reality.

The various philosophical schools in our century tried to establish principles of knowledge and understanding—standards and criteria of what is true, what is not, and what cannot be either and would have to be judged meaningless—but all began without recourse to anything outside of the mind. Consciousness was thought to be understandable without knowledge of anything of which we could be conscious. That had to come later—or so the story went. This gave rise to theories of knowledge galore: pragmatist, positivist, phenomenologist, etc. And the only thing about reality that could be used to get at the nature of knowledge was language. Today the philosophy of language is still a main field of investigation—the idea being that by examining language, we may get a glimpse at reality (despite the "colors of the lenses" that all languages possess).

But today the heavy prejudice against metaphysics is losing its force. Several philosophers have realized that consciousness without something to be conscious of makes no sense. Reality is reappearing, and its basic features are beginning to be fair game for examination. Such topics as materialism versus idealism, the mind/body identity theory, determinism and free will, monism versus dualism, reductionism versus realism (and other candidates for the basic constitution of reality), and many related topics with metaphysical implications are again on the agendas of philosophical conferences, symposiums, anthologies and other forums of dialogue and debate.

The mind/body problem, for instance, has suffered greatly from the lack of concern with metaphysics in general. The bulk of the dispute is still conducted in terms of what is linguistically more proper, economical, simple, etc., instead of *what there is.* But lately this attempt to handle the problem has been attacked, and the bulk of these attacks have focused on the method by which the problem has been tackled—without regard to questions of metaphysics. (See, e.g., R. Taylor's *ACTION AND PURPOSE,* books and articles by E. H. Madden, and recent papers by Fanny L. Epstein and John Yolton in the *AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY,* April 1973.)

Clearly metaphysics is far from the formidable field of study that it used to be in the days of Aristotle, Spinoza and Leibniz. But there are signs that its opponents are getting more meek, while its students more ambitious.

KNOWLEDGE IN FOCUS

As mentioned earlier, the last few decades, since the rise of neo-Kantian positivism, have enjoyed the dominance of skepticism. Probabilistic knowledge, justified knowledge-*claiming* approximations, and the like were proposed; but the dominant position was that knowledge as such was impossible—or if not, we certainly(!) could not know when we possessed any. Always the qualifications, always the declarations that the mind was, in the end, impotent to know. Some even rejoiced about this and spoke of the ideological advantage of skepticism. If you cannot know, you cannot justify imposing knowledge, or forcing others to act by what is true. (Many arguments for the free society rest on this position! As if knowledge *must* lead to dogmatism and authoritarianism!) But this was not argued explicitly—and when so argued, it was done badly. Attacks on people's capacity to know the world came from religious circles, also: knowledge breeds human pride. Which is true—but offensive to those who would rather tell us what is true than have us be convinced that we can find out for ourselves.

But today not only metaphysics as a field of study, but the idea that one can know the world (surely a needed concommitant) is on the rise. The view that we *can* know the world and what we think and say of it can *objectively* be shown to be true (when we are careful and attentive enough) is definitely being argued more and more.

The reasons for this reaffirmation of man's capacity to know reality include revisions of the concept "knowledge" itself. No longer do all philosophers believe that knowledge means being forever certain that what I today conclude is true will forever be the complete or last identification of what is the case. Contextualism emerged as a powerful force in epistemology through the writings of J. L. Austin, the later Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stanley Cavell, D. W. Hamlyn and Stephen Toulmin as well as many others not in the forefront of academic philosophy, such as Ayn Rand, the novelist-philosopher. My own regard for Ayn Rand as a philosopher is not shared by many academics. However, several recent books treat her thought and a number of well known philosophers such as John O. Nelson, John Hospers, Wallace I. Matson, Anthony Flew, and others have indicated

that they have high regard for Rand's philosophical acumen. My assessment of Objectivism is on record; what I want to say here has to do with trends in *academic* philosophy.

If knowledge does not entail timeless certainty, and cannot be of sense impressions or innate ideas alone, then *theories* of knowledge which emerge could make room for the *possibility* of knowledge of what is right and good, the chance for reasoned value judgments.

"Several philosophers have realized that consciousness without something to be conscious of makes no sense."

The most important features of the argument which has convinced many of the availability of knowledge are: the rejection of empiricism as an accurate analysis of what human beings are aware of; the disbelief that reality may be reduced to some one *kind* of thing, e.g., atomic facts, matter, sensory data, etc.; contextualism concerning the nature of definitions—i.e., a good or correct definition of a concept is open-ended, capable of development, but not in need of being abandoned at the mere suggestion of contrary cases; the inadequacy of behaviorism in psychology and theories of meaning; the abandonment of Cartesian dualism as the only antidote to psychophysical reductionism; the rejection by many philosophers of the unjustified, jump to "blow up" a model which works in one context to cover contexts for which it was not designed to serve as an analytic or explanatory device (e.g., the Heisenberg uncertainty principle was thus blown out of proportion by John Dewey); the serious questioning of the analytic/synthetic dichotomy; the revival of a view of man as an active agent involved in the knowing process, and innumerable other philosophical pointers.

REASON IN ETHICS

Even during the reign of emotivism in many influential Anglo/American philosophical circles, there were attempts to argue for some room for reason in our moral life. But the room was small—Charles Stevenson's views testify to this best. At bottom the answers to ethical questions were produced by one's gut, not his head. Emotions set the *goals*, reason selects the methods. This is putting how we feel into the driver's seat and how we think (or whether we do or not) in servitude. It's no wonder that political decisions as well as many of those made by people in their day to day affairs come off so confusedly, that people can't begin to come to terms on the big questions, on such things as what they are to do, to choose, to achieve in life!

But then some things happened—many things—which prompted gradual reconsiderations of these and similar turns. Not only did philosophers begin to examine arguments for the possibility of knowledge, but they started to defend the right to argue for ethics. This right had to be earned—they had to establish it. The study of moral judgments was revitalized with a view to grounding judgments. Interestingly, this was accompanied by some refreshing self-righteousness; philosophers have begun to criticize and praise each other. As one example of this, Cavell's review of David Pole's book about Wittgenstein was a devastating moral indictment. I find that refreshing as well as risky, but that goes without saying. Moral judgments must be made very carefully; to be just in one's evaluations of others is no small matter. (The *possibility* of moral knowledge implies greater *responsibility* in the area of moral judgment, not less. It is subjectivism, where standards cannot be satisfied, that makes evaluations spurious as well as rampant. After all, judgments that can be made in line with standards of correctness are far more readily open to criticism, double checking and prudence than emotional ejaculations.)

The impetus for considering values as open to rational assessment emerges shortly after, perhaps even overlaps, the rejection of skepticism. If knowledge didn't need to satisfy standards which rendered it impossible, *but* which many thought it must satisfy, then moral judgments, too, might be acquired without the need to reduce the standards of accuracy to those applied in mathematical physics, the model of "empirical" knowledge. Indeed, antireductionism left the door open for a contextual view of standards of precision and accuracy. What is needed to support judgments in physics serves the purpose of *that* field of study and so on, in psychology, astronomy, chemistry, etc.—it was a mistake to *ask* for anything else. Toulmin's *THE USES OF ARGUMENT* did much to develop the case for this. Others took it even further and argued that values required their own standard of precision and truth. (I argued this in some of my works, albeit uninfluentially.)

In short, many philosophers find it no longer axiomatic that ethics escapes the need for reasoned treatment. In fact, many argue that treating one's life rationally, living it by giving priority to rational considerations, is the standard of the well conducted life, the excellence appropriate to each person (barring those incapacitated by forces beyond them). But this is a minor move thus far, mostly carried out by those who have always favored the Aristotelian approach—Henry Veatch, Laszlo Verseni, and some Oxford analysts. And the English philosophers are very reserved about ethics—substantive, normative ethics is still a rare phenomenon on the contemporary scene. (The most affirmative ethics has come from some of the young philosophers, moved

perhaps by their worries about the Viet Nam war and the omnipresent State.)

TOWARD A THEORY OF LAW

The influence of contextualism on the philosophy of law is just now emerging. H. L. A. Hart, Hans Kelsen, Alf Ross and other legal positivists no longer have the final word about the nature of law. Here the problem was that with no room for reason in ethics and politics, the foundation of law had to be sought (i.e. posited) in *will,* not reason. A legal system gained validity because it was ultimately willed, consented to, accepted—not because it was *right.* In plain words this position led to the separation of justice and law; the moral element in legal systems was missing, at least so far as theories about the nature of law went.

"A number of well-known philosophers have indicated that they have high regard for Ayn Rand's philosophical acumen."

But this approach is also experiencing dying pains. Hart has been criticized severely by Ronald Dworkin, Rosco Hill and others. Yet this does not spell a return to naturalism in law, either—the view that to be a valid law a provision of the legal system must meet with total moral justification. All that seems to be emerging is that the *foundations* of a legal system must be morally justifiable, that provisions viewed as fundamental—constitutional edicts, bills of right, the basic human rights on which laws are founded—must be supportable, and not just any system of legal edicts could claim validity as a legal system proper, even if some features could be construed as meeting the requirements. (The task of determining at what point we are entitled to call something a proper legal system is itself now under careful scrutiny but with greater hope for the function of rational arguments instead of happenstance or rule of thumb (will).)

Aside from work on such broad levels, there is unfortunately still a great deal of irrelevancy in the philosophy of law. The method generated by epistemological positivism continues to be employed in the tackling of issues related to the nature of human action, responsibility, intention, deliberation, volition, choice and decision. Yet here too, in the works of Joel Feinberg and Herbert Morris, we can detect impatience with so-called formal analysis: analysis which is not capable of producing conclusions related to particular judgments of fact. As D. H. Lewis' book (appraising the analytic movement) is called: clarity isn't enough.

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POLITICAL RAMBLINGS

That is about all we have now in political philosophy—ramblings. Marxism, anarchism and the politics of sentiment are the most dominant, at least in the bulk of textbook political philosophy coming our way these days. The timidity in ethics is even more evident in politics. Here, however, we get closer and closer to one of the sorest points in philosophy, the problem of commitment. It is no longer easy to dismiss philosophers who defend the propriety of committing oneself to conclusions—so long as the conclusions are well founded, argument is not in order, not at least about the *right* to be committed. But I still detect fear here. Many philosophers believe in some form of *emotional* neutrality, an attitude toward philosophy which is almost apologetic: we have no answers, we merely analyze; we unpack, criticize, clarify and reach conclusions which, although rationally warranted, we must stand apart from—if only in witness to our openness.

Here the Viet Nam situation did a lot to upset matters—albeit more on an emotional and not a solid philosophical basis. The American Philosophical Association recently saw its most vehement floor battles involving the issue of whether the organization should make public statements about moral/political issues. This is not unlike what we have seen in other fields. But it is interesting to recall how the most fervent moral skeptics, like Kai Nielsen, Raziel Abelson and Hillary Putnam (people who have stood for the impossibility of reasoned moral judgments), argued most vigorously for taking a moral stance. I might mention that this didn't sit well with many graduate students—the latter must be credited with reopening old issues, demanding more than ramblings, in at least many cases known to me. (This bears emphasis: students do have the power to influence their education and education in general—but usually by sticking to their studies with dedication and perseverance, by becoming pushy in the face of orthodoxies. Not by burning down the library or altering seating arrangements in classrooms.)

"Many philosophers find it no longer axiomatic that ethics escapes the need for reasoned treatment."

The significant contributions to political theory emerge from remote corners these days. Economists, political scientists and nonacademics are included in the ranks. The most valuable offings from philosophy include the exchange between Robert Paul Wolff and Jeffrey Rieman *(IN DEFENSE OF ANARCHISM* and *IN DEFENSE OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY),* the exciting little volume by the distinguished British philosopher H. B. Acton *(THE MORALS OF MARKETS),* and articles spread out in the journals *INTERPRETATION, PHILOSOPHY AND PUBLIC POLICY, ETHICS, JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, POLITICAL THEORY, SOCIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE.* But don't expect to find *a lot* of sense and wisdom in the above lineup—clear, pointed, and honest pieces are difficult to find.

Unfortunately John Rawls' *A THEORY OF JUSTICE* turned out to be a disappointment. Rawls delivered little more than a massive volume of confusing arguments, intuitions, equivocations, impossible hypotheses—and, most bewilderingly, an attempt to make a neutral, uncommitted case for justice in a human society. (Which does not mean that many critics actually regard it a disappointment. Some, surprisingly, do, however.)

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Philosophy is supposed to attend to fundamentals. And words on fundamentals have lasting influence, be they good or bad, mistaken or correct. *Ideas,* as Richard Weaver's book is entitled, *have consequences.* There is nothing radical about that idea, though one needs to remind people of it occasionally.

Philosophy is on the rehabilitation trail, at least when we compare it to the last few decades. The signs I have focused on are still meager—much more is necessary to remake and upgrade the intellectual and philosophical atmosphere of a culture. Before we see this improvement affecting the quality of political decisions, we will see much that is negative, much that reflects the undirected, although sometimes very brilliant, thinking done in the name of philosophy.

But no age can force out the despicable, the wrong, the thoughtless, not even in some ideal, utopian benevolent dictatorship. Ours is not and will not be a struggle-free progress toward the improvement of human life, even when it comes to such a violence free area as an inquiry about the nature of reality and man's place in it. But there is no inevitable law of history driving us either to the collective grave or the security of eternal bliss. What philosophy is going to amount to in the future depends on the people who work on it. (Those who denegrate philosophy and its concerns as well as products in principles must realize, if only from experiencing how one cannot make political, even personal progress without some measure of good philosophy to work with.) And today we are entitled to say that the prospects are better than they have been in many years. In my estimation the philosophical community is just now getting a good dosage of solid, purposeful thinking—a commodity that can benefit any area of study of human life, especially the most fundamental: one's understanding of the world and his relationship to it. ◻

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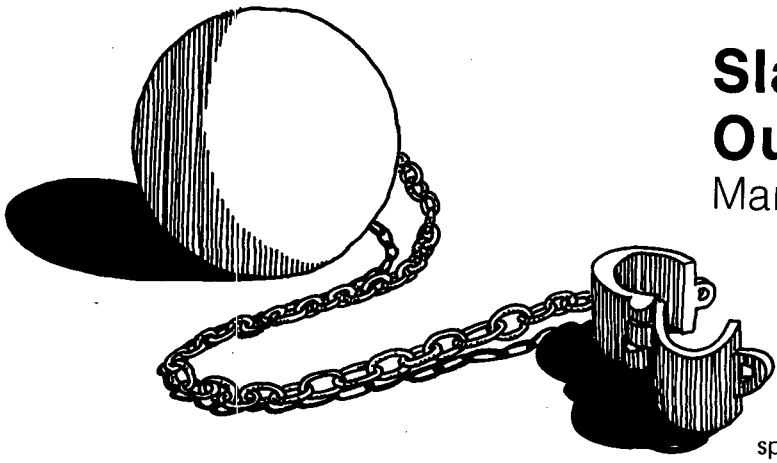

Slavery and Socialism: Our Brothers' Keepers

Mark C. Frazier

The iron trammels and bracelets identified with slavery have seldom been found in visions of utopian paternalism. Socialist theoreticians in particular have tended to dismiss slavery as a contrived, malignant species of paternalism, one which resembles socialism no more than a B-52 resembles a ladybug. Over the years, however, a few observers have challenged this position, arguing that in theory or practice socialism does show a disturbing propensity to invoke slavery's chains.

Some of the more prominent spokesmen for this view need no introduction. George Orwell, who noted the inexorable careening of German and Russian socialisms into tyranny, remarked that the world's drift "has been not towards anarchy but towards the reimposition of slavery."[1] Ayn Rand, in her novel *THE FOUNTAINHEAD,* termed socialism "universal slavery—without even the dignity of a master."[2] Friedrich Hayek warned that socialism was reducing formerly free men to serfs. But the most insistent and provocative reasons for comparing socialism to slavery are found elsewhere. They come from the writing of a now-obscure author of the antebellum South, a Virginian political philosopher named George Fitzhugh.

Fitzhugh, a plantation owner of dubious financial standing, was a vocal and articulate champion of both socialism *and* slavery. He saw them as an outgrowth of altruistic, paternalistic principles which to him stood morally miles above selfishness and individualism. In two widely-read books, *SOCIOLOGY FOR THE SOUTH* (1854) and *CANNIBALS ALL* (1857), he put forth all the evidence one might desire of similarities between the two forms of paternalism.

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Fitzhugh's philosophy had its feet in "respectable" ground: he took Christianity seriously, believed that men were their brother's keepers, decried selfishness, and thought family relationships were the ultimate sort of moral bonds.

"It is delightful to retire from the outer world, with its competitions, rivalries, envyings, jealousies, and selfish war of the wits, to the bosom of the family," Fitzhugh wrote. "You feel at once that you have exchanged the keen air of selfishness for the mild atmosphere of benevolence. Each one prefers the good of others to his own, and finds most happiness in sacrificing selfish pleasures, and ministering to others' enjoyments."[3]

The outer world, however, disgusted him. Laissez-faire society, he wrote, attempted "to banish Christian virtue, that virtue which bids us to love our nieghbor as ourself, and substitute the very equivocal virtues proceeding from mere selfishness."[4] In the outer world, war of the wits was the rule, which proved "quite as destructive to the weak, simple, and guileless as the war of the sword."[S, p. 21] Fitzhugh insisted that equal freedom to strive towards similar ends assured mutually hostile relationships: "There is no love between equals, and the divine precept, 'love thy neighbor', is thundered vainly in the ears of men straining for the same object."[S, p. 200] A simple leap in reasoning suggested to him that family relations be extended through society. He felt certain that slavery would be the best means of implementation.

"What is the difference between the authority of a parent and of a master?" Fitzhugh asked. "Neither pays wages, and each is entitled to the services of those subject to him. . . . Look closely into slavery, and you will see nothing so hideous in it; or if you do, you will find plenty of it at home in its most hideous form."[C, p. 89]

Slavery, like the family, thus fostered "protection" of the weak and promoted unselfish, Christian relationships. A master's "whole life is spent in providing for the minutest wants of others, in taking care of them in sickness and health," making him the least selfish of men, he wrote.[S, p. 247] The capitalist system, in contrast, stood callously indifferent to workers as human beings. "We believe that there is not an intelligent reformist in the world who does not see the necessity of slavery—who does not advocate its reimposition in all save the

name," Fitzhugh declared. "Every one of them concurs in deprecating free competition, and in the wish and purpose to destroy it." [S, p. 94]

Fitzhugh thought slavery, unlike capitalism, benefitted all parties involved. "The interests of master and slave are bound up together, and each in his appropriate sphere naturally endeavors to promote the happiness of the other," he wrote. [C, p. 302] Good treatment and strong discipline, he felt, made slaves happier and more grateful, while hard work and loyalty by the slave made the master more disposed to take care of him. By giving men property in one another, the Biblical injunction to "love thy neighbor" was fulfilled. [S, p. 69]

It followed from this, at least for Fitzhugh, that liberty grew in proportion to the degree man was regulated. "In every kind and degree of union and intercourse with his species," he wrote, "it is possible that the liberty of the individual may be augmented by the very laws which restrain it, because he may gain more from the limitation of other men's freedom than he suffers by the diminution of his own." [C, p.110] Specifically, restricting the shrewd and the talented would end the "exploitation" of the weak. In a devastatingly honest admission, Fitzhugh summed up the purpose of his government as being to "restrict, control, and punish man in 'the pursuit of happiness.' " [S, p. 180]

Such ends were clearly not quite those of the Declaration of Independence. The architects of the Declaration considered people sovereign beings and thought that government existed to preserve individual liberty. Fitzhugh, consequently, charged out with a counterattack against the heritage of Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison.

"Man is born a member of society, and does not form society," Fitzhugh maintained. "He has no rights whatever, as opposed to the interests of society; and that society may very properly make any use of him that will redound to the public good." [S, p.25] Such a doctrine, he wrote, made society a band of brothers instead of a bag of cats "biting and worrying each other." [S, p. 25] To him the only creatures who valued liberty were wild beasts and wild men.

Many ostensible advocates of liberty, Fitzhugh stated, were really arguing for a form of slavery. Jeffersonians, in supporting "that degree of restriction, restraint, and control that would promote the general good" were in effect pursuing good government, not liberty. [C, p. 115] "All governments must originate in force, and be continued by force," he wrote. "The very term, government, implies that it is carried on against the consent of the governed. . ." [C, p. 353]

The direction of classical liberal thinking nonetheless alarmed Fitzhugh tremendously. He saw it heading to a position of philosophical anarchism, the substitution of complete individual sovereignty for the sovereignty of society. Slavery of a far harsher type than the sort he advocated, Fitzhugh thought, would ensue—such an event would doom all attempts to guarantee the "basic right" to security and protection from competition.

Fitzhugh recognized that the Declaration of Independence appealed to the talented and productive, and that his collectivist system would not enthrall them. He cited Britain's frustration over large numbers of its best workers emigrating because of Poor Laws which limited their wages, and expressed the South's chagrin at losing some promising individuals of its own. But more importantly, he resented the economic and cultural domination of the selfish, laissez-faire North over the Christian South. That capitalists of the North should be outstripping the South's elite in wealth, power, and sophistication infuriated him: it was unfair, he thought, that avaricious exploiters should surpass the Christian aristocrats of Dixie. Fitzhugh had one consolation. He believed that capitalism could not survive.

Opening Fitzhugh's books at random often leaves the reader wondering whether whole pages were lifted from the Communist Manifesto. Nowhere is such a feeling stronger than at Fitzhugh's account of the reasons for the "inevitable" demise of capitalism. Examples:

- All competition is but the effort to enslave others, without being encumbered by their support. [C, p.40]
- Indeed, [free laborers] have not a single right or a single liberty, unless it be the right or liberty to die. [C, p.30]
- They [the poor] produce everything and enjoy nothing. [S, p.24]
- A beautiful system of ethics, this, that places all mankind in antagonistic positions, and puts all society at war. [S, p.24]
- We are not aware that anyone disputes the fact that crime and pauperism increased *pari passu* with liberty, equality, and free competition. [S, p. 36]
- Free laborers are little better than trespassers upon this earth. . . . [S, p. 249]

Fitzhugh accepted not only a Marxist analysis of capitalism's impending death, but almost every other socialist tenet as well. Of socialist views on property, Fitzhugh, a self-educated lawyer and historian, remarked: "None but lawyers and historians are aware how much truth, justice, and good sense there is in the notions of the Communists, as to the community of property." [S, p. 161]

At another point he wrote, "If the socialists had done no other good, they would be entitled to the gratitude of mankind for displaying in a strong light the advantages of the association of labor." [S, p. 47]

Fitzhugh was careful, however, to qualify some aspects of his socialism. The trouble with most socialists, he thought, was that they did not have a realistic view of man. Observation showed him that socialist communities could not exist without strong leaders—masters, in essence. Utopian socialist com-

munities succeeded only when they acquired despotic heads, like other family associations, to coordinate labor and goals.

Even Proudhon, "the greatest of all communists", had recognized this tendency for socialism to become open slavery, he said. [C, p. 263] So, instead of devising uncertain and unreliable ways to prevent slavery, Fitzhugh asked the utopian socialists to reconsider their opposition. "We slaveholders say you must recur to domestic slavery, the oldest, the best, and most common forms of Socialism," Fitzhugh wrote. "The new schools of Socialism promise something better, but admit, to obtain that something, they must first destroy and eradicate man's human nature."[S, p. 72]

Fitzhugh ended by writing that socialism and slavery alike were interested in making man his brother's keeper. As he put it, "socialism is already slavery in all save the master. It had well as adopt that feature at once, as come to that it must to make its schemes at once humane and efficient."[S, p. 70]

Fitzhugh's ideas about human nature are the most confusing aspect of his writings, and they contain contradictions which spill into his notions about property and the status of masters. In line with his refusal to indulge in the utopian fantasies of many socialists, he recognized the basic importance of selfishness. "Selfishness, as a ruler of action and a guide of conduct, is necessary to the existence of man, and of all animals," he wrote. [C, p. 80] But he further remarked that the unique attraction of slavery was that "each member best promotes his own selfish interest by ministering to the wants and interests of the rest"—ignoring the fact that exchange economies are organized exactly on that basis. [C, p. 47] That laissez-faire societies have the added benefit of giving the individual the right to withdraw from a relationship, if he finds his "wants and interests" not being adequately ministered to, Fitzhugh also ignored. At one point—rather, several—Fitzhugh said that slaves would not leave their positions even if they were granted the freedom to choose. But he did not say why, if this is the case, slaves should be denied the right to choose what their status should be!

Because Fitzhugh did recognize the importance of selfishness, he emphasized the importance of private property—a highly unusual thing for a socialist to do. He did so, however, from socialist grounds, out of a concern for the well-being of society. "Property is not a natural and divine, but conventional right; it is the mere creature of society and law," he wrote. "If private property generally were so used as to injure, instead of promote public good, then society might and ought to destroy the whole institution."[S, p. 185] How he reconciled this with another statement that it was "domestic slavery alone that can best establish a safe, efficient, and humane *community* of property" is not clear, unless he meant that the master's property was also the slaves. (emphasis added) [S, p.47]

More straightforward was Fitzhugh's position that private property would be dangerous in the wrong hands. "The author of the Declaration [of Independence] may have, and probably did mean, that all men were created with an equal title to property," he wrote. "Carry out such a doctrine, and it would subvert every government on earth. [S, p. 180] Obviously, in Fitzhugh's view, this would not have been in line with the social good. He therefore denied private property as a basic right of man.

Fitzhugh is at his most confusing when discussing the status of masters in society. In many cases, he argued that the master was as much—if not more of—a slave than anyone, since he had to maintain the health and welfare of all in his household. But in a very revealing passage in *CANNIBALS ALL,* Fitzhugh introduced a new view of the master:

> Imitation, grammar and slavery suit the masses. Liberty and laissez-faire, the men of genius, and the men born to command. . . . To secure true progress, we must unfetter genius, and chain down mediocrity. Liberty for the few—Slavery, in every form, for the mass. [C, p. 94]

Liberty to do *what* (that was not permissible in a laissez-faire society)? The answer is not explicit, but implied: the liberty to enslave without being enslaved. Rule was the object of Fitzhugh's social system—rule incorporating the obligation to be the keeper of one's brother, and in some sense, to be kept by him—but ultimately, absolute and naked rule.

George Fitzhugh raised important issues about man, the state, and morality. His insights into all were profoundly sincere; he did not attempt to disguise his belief in socialism to make his views more palatable to his fiercely antisocialist audience. He anticipated basic questions about the legitimacy of the state, what social forms are most conducive to keeping one's brother, and the origin of rights. In all these ways, he is of more than passing interest.

But his fundamental uniqueness lay in his ability as a socialist to see the common ground shared by two variants of paternalism, slavery and socialism. In exposing the moral bases of both, and giving a clear look into the totalitarian mind, he did libertarians a lasting favor.

And perhaps, more importantly, he has given modern-day socialists something to think about —evidence which supports the contentions of Rand, Hayek, and Orwell.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] Quoted from *HARVARD CRIMSON SUPPLEMENT,* February 1972.

[2] Ayn Rand, *THE FOUNTAINHEAD* (New American Library: Signet Books, 1952), p. 632.

[3] George Fitzhugh, *CANNIBALS ALL, OR SLAVES WITHOUT MASTERS* (A. Morris, 1857), p. 300; hereinafter referred to in the text as "C."

[4] George Fitzhugh, *SOCIOLOGY FOR THE SOUTH* (B. Franklin, 1854), p. 20; hereinafter referred to in the text as "S."

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One example of forcing ideas on others arises when society declares the illegality of certain actions by an individual which do not involve harm to or coercion for anyone else, which are crimes only by definition of law—victimless crimes. To the libertarian these laws make no sense, since crime cannot be properly viewed outside the context of coercion of one individual by another. The libertarian holds that moral interference where consenting adults are involved is wrong when no one else is injured. Branden then notes the relationship of interference by society in moral questions with interference in the economic sphere.

Examples of crimes in the victimless category are those against marijuana, regulation of sexual practices, etc. Branden also discusses the concept of involuntary commitment of so-called mental patients. He notes the importance of applying the basic libertarian principle of the wrongness of coercion uniformly to problems. **(58 Min. / $7.50)**

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Tape No. 165 OPPOSITION TO THE GARRISON STATE / **Leonard P. Liggio** and **Walter Grinder**, libertarians and college faculty members, discuss why libertarian tradition in foreign policy is isolationist. They also go into the real meaning of liberalism and the "progressive era" which has produced legislation not to insure competition, but to prevent the free market from operating. Unlike the other tapes, this one explains why foreign policy is a major concern to all freedom-loving Americans, a threat which can bring government supervision of every activity under the guise of "defense" against so-called agressor nations. **(65 Min. / $7.50)**

Tape No. 166 PSYCHOLOGY OF LIBERTARIANISM / **Jerome Tuccille**, author of *Radical Libertarianism* and other books, addresses the question of whether libertarianism is a left or right wing phenomenon. He distinguishes between the psychological right and left and the political right and left. The political right he defines as those who support preservation of a centralized political system, while the political left is composed of radical individualists who seek major changes to decentralize the political structure.

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editorial

SOLVING THE ENERGY CRISIS

In the midst of all the news on how Nixon's new dictatorial powers are saving us from the energy crisis, it is all too easy to lose sight of the extent to which the federal government itself created the crisis. That a serious crunch was in the making has been obvious for some time (see "The Power Crisis," *REASON,* February 1971), based on the government's absurd energy policies. For years the government has promoted the wasteful depletion of U.S. fuel reserves; by severely restricting oil imports (until last year) the government encouraged a considerably higher rate of domestic oil consumption than would have been the case during all the years when foreign crude was much cheaper than domestic; by artificially holding down the price of natural gas for decades, the government has encouraged incredibly wasteful uses of this extremely clean fuel. Among the side effects of overconsumption of natural gas has been a sharp decline in coal mining activity; thus, even though there are huge U.S. coal reserves, the capability does not currently exist to expand production fast enough to meet the need. On top of all this, the arbitrary bureaucratic imposition of environmental controls on coal mining, oil drilling, refineries, and power plants has led to severe capacity restrictions whose full *cost* is only now beginning to be considered.

Thus, when the Nixon Administration made the political decision last fall to provide massive aid to Israel (knowing full well that there was a significant risk of Arab oil cutbacks in response), it was taking risks with an energy system severely distorted from normal marketplace relationships. Hence, even though Arab oil amounts to less than 10% of America's supply, the cutback came at a time when our *other* sources were already seriously depleted, and our capacity to increase production severely curtailed.

But the U.S. might have avoided a full-blown crisis, despite the weakened energy system, had the free market mechanism been able to operate effectively to deal with the shortage of crude and its rippling effects throughout the entire energy and petrochemical industry. However, the oil cutoff came precisely at a time when the market mechanism had been thoroughly crippled by the bureaucratic dictates of the Cost of Living Council. Even before the oil shortage hit, American industry was waist-deep in an incredible miasma of shortages, production bottlenecks, and inequities caused by wage and price controls.

Cases in point:

- Since the overseas free market prices of chemicals such as benzene, ethylene, and methanol are two to three times higher than the frozen U.S. prices, a black market has sprung up, in which U.S. producers sell to overseas buyers, who resell the chemicals to U.S. consumers, all at free market prices. Both producers and consumers thereby evade the price controls.
- Similar situations exist in such areas as steel, nonferrous metals, and plastics. These goods are in short supply in the U.S., because producers are able to get up to 50% more in free markets overseas. (Some of these controls were eased in December.)
- A severe shortage of fertilizer threatens 1974's farm production, yet it was not until November that the CLC decontrolled fertilizer prices. (Incidentally, one of the key factors in fertilizer production is ammonia, which is made from natural gas.)
- By controlling the price of gasoline all year, the CLC managed to keep gasoline a bargain, thereby encouraging high levels of consumption and promoting summer shortages, even before the Arab cutoff.

If was *this* kind of a marketplace that had to adjust to the impact of a sudden Arab oil cutoff, and it is hardly surprising that visions of crisis appeared in the government's heads.

So now what is to be done? By the time this magazine reaches you, it is likely that the Administration will have "reluctantly" begun a program of gasoline rationing. Senator Jackson has called for making the oil companies into regulated public utilities, with stringent controls on prices and profits. And the Administration has put into effect a program of petroleum "allocations" to industrial users, based on last year's usage (which means, among other things, that coal mines and oil drilling rigs can't get the extra diesel fuel they need to expand production).

None of these measures will solve the energy crisis. They will succeed only in granting additional life and death powers to more armies of bureaucrats. They will not solve the economic problems of equating demand with supply: they will merely spread out the shortages, in an equal—and therefore arbitrary—fashion. But a true solution must solve not only the current supply/demand problem but also the longer-term problem of ensuring adequate energy supplies.

The surest way to accomplish both aims is to deregulate *all* prices, the sooner the better. Freed of controls, prices will rise steeply to equate demand and supply, and the resulting higher profits will stimulate increases in exploration, expansion of plant capacity, and development of new energy sources. It is not just energy prices that should be deregulated: there is no way to drill for oil or build refineries or conduct research and development without materials, tools, machinery, and equipment. The country can no longer tolerate controls-induced shortages of virtually everything. The only way to ensure adequate supplies of energy and materials is to allow the economic system to do its job—an incredibly complex job that no group of bureaucrats, no matter how well-informed or well-intentioned, has the ability to do. A recent article in the *LOS ANGELES TIMES* ("Nation Lacks 'Fuel Gauge' for Crisis Planning") lamented the government's inability to measure whether its measures for dealing with the energy crisis were working. How ironic an admission for the government to make, after it has spent the past three years destroying the measuring instruments—the free market price system.

Despite the economic rationality of the case for deregulation and decontrol, the usual argument against it is political: allowing unregulated price increases and "windfall profits" for oil companies is considered politically suicidal. But the Nixon Administration has long since lost its political credibility and has no re-election prospects in any event. What more noble an act of statesmanship than for Richard Nixon to throw political considerations to the winds and *(this time)* do instead what is right. The country is at a crucial turning point between permanent controls and a return to the marketplace. By restoring the free market to America, Nixon may someday be remembered as more than just a cheap politician.

ROBERT POOLE, JR.

money $

Davis E Keeler

MONEY IN THE MAIL

How would you like an investment which shows a steady growth in real value, requires almost no upkeep, can be easily transported and sold anywhere in the Western World, and is largely invisible to the government? This paragon of investment virtue is none other than that friend of our childhood, **the postage stamp.**

When Ian Fleming's villainous Dr. No wished to spirit his ill-gotten gains from New York City to his guano factory retreat in the Caribbean he chose not cash, bullion, or precious stones, but a small envelope full of rare postage stamps. In these days when you have trouble getting on an airplane with so much as a suspicious-looking fountain pen, you can appreciate the problems of trying to go somewhere with your hoard of silver bars. Stamps, on the other hand, weigh essentially nothing, will not trip a metal detector, and if carried properly will do little to call unwanted attention to themselves. They have the added virtue of being unregistered and largely untraceable (this is, of course, a *dis*advantage if they are stolen). And as with almost all antiques, their nature makes them effectively immune to price controls.

The price action of better quality collectors' stamps (particularly the pre-World War II issues of the U.S., Canada, Northern Europe and the British Empire) has been quite satisfactory, generally keeping well ahead of inflation and providing an acceptable (sometimes *very* acceptable) real rate of return. While the reasons for this are many, they include the familiar one of a fixed supply of material being bid up by an increasing number of collectors. The supply, in fact, actually declines due to accidental loss and acquisition by permanent institutional collections.

1929 Postal Union Congress

1963	1966	1973
£8	£30	£75

The price of certain issues is also inflated by another familiar factor, our old friend the evil speculator. The virtues of stamps as a vehicle of investment have not gone unnoticed by noncollectors and we have consequently seen rashes of speculation on various issues, sometimes reminiscent of the Tulipmania. The best advice for the investor would likely be to avoid like the plague any issue which seems to have been the subject of speculation, since the support for a stamp's price is ultimately the collector and if the collector is priced out of the market the speculators are left trying to sell to each other. One dealer remarked that the stamps of Israel and the Vatican have recently been good examples of these speculators' bubbles.

Speculators aside, the field is studded with snares for the unwary. Foremost of these are the plethora of modern issues which are sold by unscrupulous government postal administrations with no other purpose than bilking collectors.

1847 Mauritius "Post Office"

1963	1966	1973
£5,000	£15,000	£20,000

Investment by noncollectors is made difficult by the fact that stamps are described and traded in a highly specialized vocabulary and minor variations in paper, coloration or engraving may have a significant effect on the price of a stamp.

Investment in stamps is made even more difficult by the problem of obtaining current price information. While an average collectible grade of a particular stamp may sell at a fixed percent of its *SCOTTS CATALOGUE* price, a fine, well-centered specimen may sell at a premium over the catalog price. As one dealer commented, "On good quality material, it's whatever the market will bear; it's a seller's market."

This "seller's market" relates to another problem for the investor, the difficulty in finding enough choice material to buy. While your stockbroker can soak up $20,000 in the twinkling of an eye, it's darn hard to spend that on stamps and still know what you are buying. You cannot, for example, decide that the King George V £1 Postal Union, which catalogues at about $200, is a good investment and go buy $20,000 worth of them: you just can't find that many being offered. With the exception of a handful of individual "classics," to spend that much for stamps you will have to buy collections which will contain a great deal of material that you will know little about insofar as its investment potential is concerned.

While stamps may be inflation-resistant, they are not necessarily depression-proof. Based on past experience, the intermediate and lesser range material (at a guess, individual stamps worth less than $500 apiece) may, in a depression, be dropped on the market by investors and collectors who need cash, while the more expensive items may be in firmer hands. To the extent that some of these costlier items are held by investment syndicates (and perhaps even leveraged) then they too would be imperiled by a major depression.

There is another snare for the investor, perhaps more treacherous than any of the others. It is standard investment advice not to "get married" to your investment. Be heartless when you look at your portfolio and do not form emotional attachments to your shares. But stamps, alas, are very pretty things, particularly the older "classics," and so often it will happen that a person first drawn into stamps as an investor (yea, even as a speculator) has felt the appeal of these pretty little pieces of paper and gone from a cold-blooded capitalist to an emotionally-involved, enthusiastic collector who would no sooner sell a beloved stamp than he would sell one of his own children. *Caveat emptor.* ◻

Davis Keeler's Money column alternates monthly in REASON with John J. Pierce's Science Fiction column.

foreign correspondent

SLOWING SOCIALISM DOWN

Sydney, N.S.W. That libertarian ideas are desperately needed here in Australia is evident when one considers our current political situation. The Labor Party was recently voted into power for the first time in 23 years—probably more out of desperation than love on the part of the majority of voters. This means we now have a socialist/labour union/bureaucrat coalition, in place of the previous state capitalist/business/bureaucrat coalition. The previous Liberal-Country Party governments were fond of paying lip-service to free enterprise, whilst slowly leading us into the same welfare state that the present Labor government has in store for us. The only difference was one of velocity.

To make matters worse, the Australian voter is not even able to (legally) register his discontent by not voting. In this "free", democratic country of ours, we have that ultimate contradiction: **compulsory voting** for all people over the age of 18. One must register on reaching the magic age and then vote when so instructed, like a good, obedient free person should.

The labour union leaders are mostly communists or socialists—certainly the most active ones are. The Builders Labourers' Union, led by an official of the Australian Communist Party, has succeeded in halting development projects worth millions of dollars, in the name of "environmental protection" or "preserving our national heritage." The National Trust will soon own Sydney if the present rate of "preservation of buildings of historical interest" (to whom??) continues. Today, any developer wishing to erect a building must *first* obtain approval from this union. He must *then* obtain approval from about ten government departments (such as the Height of Buildings Committee, the State Planning Authority and the National Trust). This priority of the union over the government is in fact observed. In retaliation, the major building contractors have banned weekend work, and rightly so. However, the N.S.W. president of the Builders Labourers' Federation, Mr. Bob Pringle, has said: "This strike by employers is a disgrace to their industry. Their action is completely unwarranted." This comes after nearly three years of industrial violence and intimidation on the part of these unions, done mainly to achieve political ends. Of course the unions do have a solution: Mr. Pat Clancy, president of the Socialist Party of Australia (formed after a break from the Communist Party of Australia) and acting-Federal Secretary of the Builders Workers' Industrial Union immediately said: "I think we will be demanding six days pay for five days work."

We recently suffered an 8 week petrol strike because a foreman, on a wet day, handed out wet weather gear to his men rather than wait for the storeman to arrive on the job—about two hours late! The lines of demarcation that the unions have drawn up are strictly adhered to. If a fitter does rigger's work he will cause a general strike, as will an engineer if he picks up any tool. The employers have largely forfeited their right to hire and fire. Firing a man for sloppy work or for sleeping on the job will, in many cases, result in a general strike. Postal strikes just before Christmas are another favourite. (It is a personal ambition of mine to organize a "mail-in" campaign just before a mail strike: to mail in packages of old dead fish, prawns, rotten eggs (broken) or anything else suitably stinking, and let them sit there in the mail exchanges for the duration of the strike!) Union membership is compulsory, and all voting is done by a show of hands. For good reason the union leaders have resisted the introduction of the secret ballot.

As a result of such actions, the unions are not generally popular, but most people suffer them because of the mistaken notion that they are the only protection poor consumers have against the vicious, exploiting capitalists. In order to rid ourselves of that myth (and others), there is an enormous amount of work to be done over here, writing the Australian equivalents to such books as *THE REGULATED CONSUMER, THE FEDERAL BULLDOZER, THE NEW RACISM* and *THE TRIUMPH OF CONSERVATISM,* to name a few. I have no knowledge of any books giving facts of the Australian situation in such areas. These books would, I think, be widely read, and could have a dramatic effect on the thinking of many Australians. For instance, one really sore point with the public is the high cost of land and houses. A book dealing with the effect of zoning, regulations, government planning, monopolies in "essential services", etc., could capitalize on this discontent.

It is important to realize that the total population here is approximately 13 million people, and it is spread over quite a large area. There is no real choice in many important areas, in both the theoretical and practical fields. In politics, the choice is between socialist party A and socialist party B. We have no equivalent of the W. F. Buckley, Jr.-type conservatives (bad though they might be in many important respects), or of groups such as Foundation for Economic Education, Intercollegiate Studies Institute, or even Society for Individual Liberty. These ideas are dead as far as Australia is concerned. Radio and television stations are strictly controlled, with government stations operating in both fields (the Australian Broadcasting Commission). Railways, the Post Office, telephone services, some shipping lines, two of our three airlines, and all the roads are government owned and run. (The third airline is government subsidized and controlled.) The marketing of such items as wool, meat, fruit, eggs, wheat, and sugar is government controlled by subsidies and the operation of Boards: the Egg Board, the Wool Board, etc.

The future promises to be worse. The unions are currently campaigning for a basic wage rise of about $14 per week, and, at the same time, the introduction of a 35 hour working week (remember that the average wage here would be around $5,000 per year). These demands will be met in part at least. Meanwhile the new government has embarked on a large number of expensive programs, resulting in a record budget deficit of over $1 billion. Politicians and top public servants have been granted salary increases of approximately $5,000 per year, fees have been abolished at universities, 30 new government departments are to be set up, and all forms of social services have been increased. To cap it all we have been promised that direct taxation will not be increased—this year!

If you think that adds up to a first class formula for inflation you might be right. Former Treasurer and now Leader of the Opposition, Billy Snedden, estimates that inflation will reach 10% in the next year. All things being equal, that would be a conservative estimate. However, the government has the matter well in hand: we now have a Prices Justification Tribunal, which has the power to investigate both future *and past* price increases.

Australia is approaching the ratio of one in three people as public servants. Soon there will not be any "public"! In addition, the medical profession is fighting for its survival. *Of course* the government has promised not to socialize the medical profession. It is *merely* going to introduce a National Health Scheme, and that is a completely different thing! The people are taxed an extra 1.35% of their taxable income, and the doctors will bill the government. It follows that the doctors' fees will thus be controlled by the government, and it is also not hard to imagine which doctors will take advantage of such a scheme: the worst of them. One splinter group of the medical profession, the **General Practitioner's Society**, is defending itself on libertarian grounds.

The only known group in Australia that readers of *REASON* would recognize as libertarian is the **Alliance for Individual Rights.** Apart from that, there are numerous Rand admirers hiding in the woodwork (and our experience has been that the majority of these are rather loathe to leave it), one West Australian wheat farmer, **Len Casley**, fighting a lonely battle to preserve his Hutt River Province (see *REASON*, July 1971, p. 23), and another West Australian with libertarian tendencies—mining millionaire, **Lang Hancock.**

Although it may not seem so, there are some reasons for us to be optimistic. The **Young Liberal Party**—or at least some branches of it—have just discovered Ayn Rand, and she seems to have caused a minor sensation there. The doctors, as I have mentioned, are using libertarian ideas. The Alliance for Individual Rights has recently expanded onto two university campuses in Sydney, and is active in other areas as well. There are distinct secessionist tendencies in West Australia that may, one day, find a direction. And lastly, there is the personal development and satisfaction that comes from a study of libertarian ideas. Personally, I think it is a waste of time being pessimistic—one might as well jump in front of a bus. I choose to fight.

R. A. HOWARD

The Libertarian Party of California wants YOU!

The largest state LP organization in the nation is busily making plans to dismantle California's oppressive bureaucracy (pardon the redundancy). We could use your help. Contact our state headquarters or one of the Regional chairmen listed below.

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book review

Reviewed by DENNIS J. CHASE

LAND USE WITHOUT ZONING. By Bernard H. Siegan. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, Lexington Books, 1972. Pp. 271. $10.00

The current land use mess in the United States makes zoning such an easy target, really. Civil libertarians point out that it violates due process. Many conservatives challenge it on the basis of individual rights. Liberals crank out angry charges of racial exclusion and unfair protection of white, upper-class, suburban land values. The heat is on, and yet zoning persists.

It persists because a tradition as long and as deep as zoning creates its own constituency, members of which have ordered their lives to zoning as they have to gravity and traffic lights. Suddenly into this order come big-city mayors and state governors, who complain that zoning —which involves density and lot-size restrictions, and zoned neighborhoods—is being used by suburbs to keep out their "fair share" of low-income housing. Zoning, say the politicians, is exclusionary. But Bernard Siegan's message *must* be heard because it is the only honest characterization and offers the only way out: "All zoning is exclusionary, and is expected to be exclusionary; that is its purpose and intent."

Siegan has now published all his findings on zoning and, with publication of *LAND USE WITHOUT ZONING,* the debate may never be the same again. Siegan's contention is that all of the alleged rewards of zoning can be accomplished without zoning, at less expense, with greater freedom and fewer untoward side-effects. Keep in mind: Siegan is not a libertarian (as he concedes), but a scholar, who is led inexorably to his conclusions not by prejudgments, but by the tedious, methodical research which he presents in his book. It is this aspect which makes him so valuable.

The villain in Siegan's tale is politics:

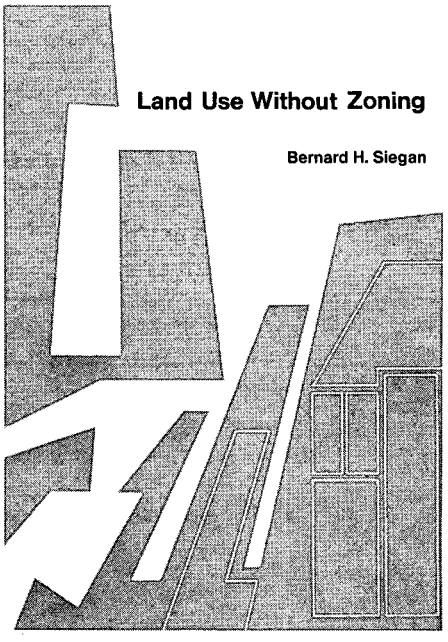
> It will be in an atmosphere of considerable controversy that a great many land use decisions will be made by councilmen in bigger cities .... Politics, money, public relations, personal business and friendships may well be on the line in many votes. The recommendation of the planners will be one element in the mix and probably an unimportant one when political considerations enter. Considered as a whole, a compromise document will emerge that will duly satisfy the obligations of the legislative process in a representative society, but will have little relationship to any rational criteria for the use of land.

Siegan updates and further substantiates all the standard antizoning arguments: zoning reduces competition (by restricting entry into various commercial and residential markets), curtails urban development and cuts tax revenues (by limiting the variety of land uses within particular areas), promotes false "order" and esthetics at the expense of people's needs (says Siegan: "several or more commercial strips and industrial parks are an inexpensive price to pay for better schools"), drives up housing costs and causes a housing shortage by limiting the supply of multiple-family units, adds paperwork and years to land use changes, excludes "undesirables," etc.

HOUSING THE POOR

These arguments have been made before; the difference is that Siegan *proves* them. For example, he explains that zoning may be a major factor in causing the current housing shortage in the United States by imposing density restrictions, limiting multiple-family dwellings (especially in the suburbs) and boosting the cost of existing apartments, flats, and so forth. He shows that zoning undercuts the natural "trickle-down" process which, according to a landmark University of Michigan survey that has been roundly ignored, results in 3.5 moves for every new housing unit built. It is a devastating argument to those who moan: "But then, who will build new homes for the poor?" No one has to, says Siegan, *as long as they are built for the rich.* He writes: "[T]he addition of one new housing unit to the market serves not only the intended occupants, but also several other families or individuals who are able to move as a result ...."

But what makes Siegan's book so outstanding is that he not only presents the nonzoning or "zero" zoning free market approach to land use but *proves* it. Siegan is one of the few free market advocates to successfully counter the Argument From the Worst Example. This



technique attempts to debunk an untried proposal by presenting the least desirable of all possible consequences as the inevitable result. Some of the variants are: "If drugs are free, addiction will increase," and "If everyone is free, the poor will starve." Another one is, "Without zoning, there will be chaos." To which Siegan replies: "Look at Houston."

Siegan's study of Houston is presented in full, and it is unanswerable. Residents of this thriving Texas community have twice voted down zoning referenda. It suffers little from any of the predicted unfavorable consequences of no-zoning, although it does have certain subdivision controls, a building code, and housing and traffic ordinances. But it has no official density restrictions or zoned neighborhoods, and a minimal lot size ordinance. How does it work?

USE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

This is Siegan's most lasting contribution to the zoning debate. He shows that, in Houston, property values are sufficiently protected and use separations occur in a rational manner because of industry proclivities ("the tendency of industry is to segregate itself") and restrictive covenants. To those who say, "Who wants to live next to a glue factory?" Siegan points out

that the example of Houston shows the glue factory owner would also prefer not being near you, but rather near other industry. Siegan demolishes the argument that property values become unstable or that single family homes suffer without zoning. The covenants—voluntary legal agreements—and simple economics are rational arbiters of land use. They are economic (not political), and the covenants have expiration dates and do not regulate vacant sites. "Restrictive covenants are a market device to maximize the value of homes," says Siegan. "Most American homeowners prefer to live in a homogeneous single-family environment, and they should have the freedom to pursue this goal, provided others are not thereby harmed . . . . Restrictive covenants come close to achieving this balance." Siegan's Houston research is presented in great detail, and has the effect of a conversation-stopper. Through it all, Siegan is leading to the conclusion that zoning is a problem-maker, not problem-solver, and that nonzoning is the way out.

The book is difficult reading, but that is not the only problem. Siegan has a somewhat naive faith in the inevitableness of market solutions to land use problems (much like those who predict the worst results from the market), and his book is marked by the flavor of utopian rhetoric. The market, of course, is just a convenient fiction to describe the myriad of economic dealings that go on in a civilized society. The market confers nothing; it merely reflects the strengths and weaknesses of its participants. Its hallmark is not goodness, but *justice,* and it offers not rewards, but whatever people deserve.

Siegan also shows a certain confusion over what the democratic process can accomplish—he favors straw votes and referenda on some occasions to defeat zoning ordinances, most of which have never been voted on. It is a strategy—he makes that clear—but one wonders about the long-term effects of these substitutes for wisdom. What should be remembered is that, at heart, Siegan is a social-costs man nurtured at the University of Chicago.

But *LAND USE* is one of those satisfying books that goes beyond the moment and the particular issue to make a more basic point: freedom works, and here's how. In his introduction, Professor R. H. Coase of the University of Chicago Law School points out: "What Mr. Siegan shows, and it is this which makes his study of interest to a much wider audience than those professionally concerned with zoning, is that the market can be used effectively to solve problems which it is commonly thought can only be handled by government regulation."

Unfortunately, in the unstinting praise coming from all quarters for this book, this point is lost. But perhaps it is enough to say that if there is to be a turn to the market in land use, Bernard Siegan's book is the lodestone which points the way. ◻

Dennis J. Chase is a frequent contributor to REASON *and other publications. His article "No, Virginia, There Is No Santa Claus" appeared in our December 1973 issue.*

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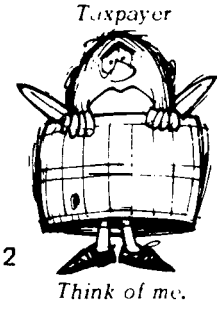

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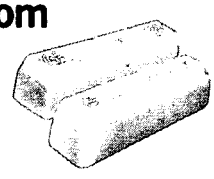

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movies

REVIEWED BY
CHARLES BARR

• Clint Eastwood's latest magnum opus, **MAGNUM FORCE,** is a sequel to *DIRTY HARRY* and in many ways a significant departure from the earlier film. While *DIRTY HARRY* sought to dramatize the folly of laws and court decisions that give aid and comfort to criminals, *MAGNUM FORCE* focuses on the potential reaction to this state of affairs within a big-city police department. Eastwood, reprising his role as a law-and-order detective, is confronted with a group of young rookies who have formed a "death squad" to execute gangsters who have hidden successfully behind their lawyers. While not abandoning his earlier principles, Eastwood is forced to defend them from a different and unexpected perspective, in a clash of ideas that lifts this movie several notches above conventional police thrillers. In the areas of action and plot development the film is absorbing and fast-moving; one hardly notices its two-hour length. Clint Eastwood delivers a coolly understated performance, keeping his superhero image intact if occasionally overdone. Impressive and capable support is provided by Hal Holbrook as Eastwood's bureaucratic superior and Felton Perry as his bemused partner. Adele Yoshioka has an ornamental role as Eastwood's compliant neighbor lady, and Margaret Avery is effective as a hapless prostitute who proves that drinking Drano can be hazardous to your health. David Soul, Tim Matheson, Robert Urich and Kip Niven seem chillingly real as the rookies wearing brown shirts beneath their blue uniforms. The tight script by John Milius and Mike Cimino is marred only occasionally by cliche. All in all, *MAGNUM FORCE* is a remarkable accomplishment: a sequel that has something new to say. Rated "R."

• **JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL** is the biggest package of inspirational fluff (no pun intended) since *THE SOUND OF MUSIC.* The woozy concoction of "can do" psychology and Platonist-existentialist philosophy should be enough to give even Norman Vincent Peale the creeps. The book (and now the movie) concerns a young gull, Jonathan by name, who by his own solitary effort learns to fly much faster and farther than the rest of the flock. He tries to impart this knowledge to his peers; but the flock, locked into convention and conformity, orders him to cease and desist; when he refuses, he is exiled. So far, so good, even if the plot is simplistic and overly reminiscent of Ayn Rand's *ANTHEM.* Now the fun begins. Jonathan in his lonely travels discovers there are other gulls like him, but in a more advanced state of "perfection"—which is defined as being without limits. "A seagull," Jonathan learns, "is an unlimited idea of freedom, an image of the Great Gull." To achieve perfection, one must shed one's limits by shedding one's nature, else one is condemned to repeat one's life through reincarnation. The film implies that there is no such thing as deliberate evil, only the failure to understand; all must be forgiven. These ideas, of course, are all around us. But rarely are negations of reality, reason and ethics packaged as an explicit and comprehensive world-view. The "practical" implications of author Richard Bach's ideas can be found in the cults of Eastern mysticism that periodically sweep the country. Technically the film version of *JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL* is a mixed bag. Visually the movie is quite stunning, with endless panoramic vistas of seagulls in flight; but the sonorous voice of Neil Diamond brings it back to earth quickly enough. The use of human voices for the gulls tends to spoil the illusion, especially since they don't open their beaks during most of the conversations. Those more disposed toward the movie's philosophy may be able to put up with these idiosyncrasies; for myself, two hours of watching seagulls is enough to drive me bats. Rated "G."

Clint Eastwood leaps upon a car during a gun battle in MAGNUM FORCE.

• Don't be misled by the title: **SCHLOCK** is an outrageous, well-made parody of horror films that could well become a classic of its type. The inevitable cliches are leavened with enough original humor to keep the satire from becoming too heavy-handed; the audience still has to guess what's coming next. John Landis, who wrote and directed, stars as the Schlocthropus, a "missing link" that has returned to life after being locked in ice for 20 million years or so. After terrorizing a community and doing in several hundred of its inhabitants, he becomes known as the "banana killer" because of his habit of leaving banana peels beside his victims. Schlock's misadventures include falling in love with a blind girl, who thinks he's a dog and makes him fetch sticks until he's out of his mind; becoming traumatized at a movie theater watching Steve McQueen in *THE BLOB;* and discovering the use of weapons in a brilliant take-off on *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.* The whole enterprise is calculated to drive the audience, as well as the victims, bananas. Rated "PG."

trends

This column reports trends in the advancement of individual liberty and the rediscovery of economic freedom. Readers are invited to submit material of potential interest.

NO SECURITY AFTER ALL

Although government regulation is an acknowledged failure in many areas of consumer interest (e.g., the domains of the CAB, the ICC, the FDA, etc.) few have thought to question the efficacy of government protection of investors, by means of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Until recently, the only scholar impertinent enough to question the SEC's benefits was Chicago economist George Stigler, whose 1964 analysis of the effects of the Securities Act of 1933 raised significant doubts. Last year, however, Stigler's work was considerably extended by Prof. George Benston of the University of Rochester. Prof. Benston has examined in detail the SEC rules requiring periodic disclosure (filing with the SEC) of company financial information. After examining (empirically) every argument in favor of the rules, Benston flatly states that they have had "no measurable positive effect on the securities traded on the New York Stock Exchange. There appears to have been little basis for the legislation and no evidence that it was needed or desirable."

These are serious charges, of course, calling into question one of the primary justifications given for the SEC's existence. To understand why the disclosure rules are of no benefit, and how Benston reached this conclusion, the following examples should prove helpful.

- Benston examined whether the SEC's disclosure system can provide information to investors quickly enough to be useful in making investment decisions. His exacting statistical analysis indicated that by the time the information reaches the public via SEC reports, it appears to have been completely discounted by the market. The strong implication is that insider information is in fact the basis for most price movements in the stock market.
- He examined the famous charge by the SEC that lack of disclosure in 1929 was a principal contributing factor to the success of the "manipulation by massive pool operations" in over 100 stocks. In fact, involvement in pool operations was just as frequent for those companies making disclosures as for those making none. Thus, the operation of pools "owed little to the nondisclosure of accounting data."
- Benston also addressed the argument that absence of the SEC would cause investors to lose confidence and stay out of the market. To test this proposition, Benston compared the statistical "riskiness" of various stocks prior to 1934, and found no difference between those that did and those that did not disclose the type of information subsequently required by the SEC.

In addition to these statistical analyses, Benston (who is himself a CPA, in addition to being an economist) points out several other drawbacks of the SEC's disclosure rules, among them the fact that the SEC's extremely conservative accounting rules actually make some of today's disclosures more misleading than those made voluntarily prior to 1934. He points out that in the 1920's the Stock Exchange itself required all listed firms to be audited, and that competition in selling securities had led the majority to disclose voluntarily such data as their sales and depreciation costs.

Apparently, then, the SEC is little different from the other federal regulatory agencies: irrelevant at best, a costly imposition at worst, justified in the public's mind by economic folklore. Fortunately, that folklore is now being exposed.

SOURCES:

- "Sins of Commission – A New Study Challenges SEC Disclosure Policies," Henry G. Manne, *BARRON'S*, 20 August 1973.
- "Required Disclosure and the Stock Market: An Evaluation of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934," George J. Benston, *AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW*, Vol. 63, No. 1, March 1973.

ENDING THE NEW PROHIBITION

Early last October the state of Oregon became the first of the 50 states to repeal its law prohibiting the private possession and use of marijuana. Much to the dismay of critics, Oregon was not overrun with drug-crazed hippies: people still went to work, families stayed together, children remained in school. In short, life continued just about as always, except that hundreds of people avoided the stigma of being labeled "criminal" for partaking of a mild, apparently harmless recreational drug.

There are strong indications that Oregon won't be the last state to "decriminalize" marijuana. In recent months several influential organizations have seconded the recommendation of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse that the "new prohibition" be ended. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended that states "reevaluate" their laws making criminal such victimless activities as marijuana possession and use, gambling, prostitution, adult sexual acts, and pornography. The American Medical Association urges that states not consider marijuana use to be anything more than a misdemeanor. More significantly, the American Bar Association has openly endorsed the removal of all criminal penalties against marijuana possession, as has the National Conference of Commissioners of Uniform State Laws.

In the nation's most populous state, the California Marijuana Initiative is gearing up for a second attempt at decriminalization via a ballot initiative. In the 1972 election the group's decriminalization proposal received 33.5% of the vote. In 1974, the initiative's backers expect to get 40-43%, according to strategist Gordon Brownell, a libertarian and former White House aide. Brownell considers the 40-43% mark as a critical threshold for serious consideration by the legislature. So, apparently, does conservative columnist Kevin Phillips, who considers the California vote as a harbinger of things to come for the rest of the U.S. With Oregon and California showing the way, and prestigious national organizations lending their support, the days of marijuana prohibition may well be numbered.

SOURCES:

- "Marijuana: The Political Future," Kevin Phillips syndicated column, 10 June 1973.
- News items, *CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWSLETTER*, Vol. 4, No. 17, 4 September 1973.
- "Grass Grows More Acceptable," *TIME*, 10 September 1973.
- (*THE MARIJUANA REVIEW*, Vol. 1, No. 9, September 1973 gives a complete history of the 1972 California initiative campaign and the planned 1974 ballot effort. It is published by AMORPHIA, 2073 Greenwich St., San Francisco, CA 94123.)

THE USURY MYSTIQUE

Probably the oldest form of price control is the usury law, limiting the amount of interest which can be charged on loans. Usury laws stem from the ancient religious prejudice against interest, *per se,* as evil. In fact, it was not until the 16th century that this prejudice was largely overcome, as part of the emergent "Protestant ethic." Still, the mystique lingers on in the form of usury laws in all 50 states, fixing the maximum price of credit.

Over the years voices of rationality have prevailed in varying degrees in most states, to create "loopholes" in the usury laws for small loans, retail credit, and various business and bank loans. But in most states the usury laws still apply to mortgages. In today's tight money climate, the usury laws are thus wreaking havoc with the mortgage market. The situation is particularly bad in New York, New Jersey, and Minnesota, which are saddled with an 8% interest ceiling. With banks paying 10½ to 11% to get short-term funds, and the prime rate between 9 and 10%, they can hardly afford to loan money out at 8%. None of this jaunts such critics as the New Jersey AFL-CIO. With its usual Neanderthal grasp of economics, the union advocates a forced reduction of mortgage rates to 6%, to "enable people of modest incomes to afford housing."

Nowhere is the comparison between economic naivete and reality more apparent than in Arkansas, where the usury law is part of the state constitution. In Arkansas a 10% ceiling applies to *all* loans, without exception. In today's market, therefore, credit of all kinds is disappearing in Arkansas. Home mortgages are nearly impossible to obtain, commercial and industrial developments are being cancelled, and bank certificates of deposit are going unsold. Most large finance companies have left Arkansas altogether, while retail merchants have resorted to raising list prices or moving across the border. The comparison is best illustrated in Texarkana, a city of 52,000 which straddles the Texas-Arkansas border. On the Texas side there are 11 new car dealers and 23 used car dealers; the Arkansas side has no new car dealers and three used car dealers. There are 21 furniture and appliance stores on the Texas side, but only six on the Arkansas side; 25 finance companies on the Texas side and none on the Arkansas side.

Despite such evidence, the Arkansas AFL-CIO supports the usury law. "It's one of the finest laws we've ever had," says the state union president. Just the opposite is the view of Edward Penick, president of the state's only bank holding company. Looking to what will happen unless the usury law is repealed, Penick predicts "The average working man looking for a car, mobile home, or boat won't be able to find a loan. The Arkansas usury law, which is supposed to protect the small borrower, is going to be his downfall."

SOURCES:

- "Useless Usury Laws," *TIME,* 10 September 1973.
- "Arkansas: A Usury Law Dries Up Loan Funds," *BUSINESS WEEK,* 29 September 1973.

BRINGING IN THE GAS

One of the acknowledged causes of this winter's energy crisis is the federal government's regulation of natural gas prices. Under terms of the Natural Gas Act of 1938, the Federal Power Commission is required to fix the price of natural gas at lower than free market levels, supposedly for the benefit of consumers. In recent years, these below-market prices have been insufficient to finance continued exploration and development, and as a result, U.S. reserves have been dropping and shortages are becoming widespread. The solution to the problem—deregulation—should have been obvious, even apart from economic theory. Available for everyone to see was the fact that producers in the unregulated *intrastate* markets (e.g. *within* Texas or Louisiana) have been free to raise their prices, and have continued to bring in new reserves. (Intrastate prices are now twice interstate prices.) The shortages that exist are in interstate gas sales.

To its credit, the FPC has been urging deregulation for several years, and has done what it could (within its legislative constraints) to allow prices to rise. Indeed, on at least one occasion during 1973, the FPC's decision to allow price increases was overturned in the courts. The Commission has allowed large price increases on certain "new" sales, and recently announced that the law gave it no jurisdiction *whatever* over prices of synthetic gas (e.g. gas produced from coal or naptha), a decision of potentially great future significance.

Despite its sympathy for deregulation, the FPC is limited by its Congressional mandate. And there are intense pressures in Congress to "solve" the gas shortage by extending price regulation to intrastate sales (as proposed in a bill by Senator Adlai Stevenson III). Lee White, director of the Consumer Federation of America, agrees with this view, and even proposes creation of a TVA-type government corporation to compete with private gas producers. White also criticizes the idea of higher prices as a stimulant to increased production, making statements such as "There is absolutely no credible evidence indicating the additional volume of gas that would be produced and available at any price."

But on the contrary, there is considerable evidence indicating precisely that. Two MIT economists, Paul MacAvoy and Robert Pindyck, have constructed a detailed econometric model of the natural gas market, containing explicit policy variables. It simulates both the market for new gas reserves (sold to pipeline companies) and the wholesale market for gas delivered by pipeline. MacAvoy and Pindyck have used the model to evaluate three policy alternatives: deregulation of wellhead prices, more extensive "cost of service" regulation than now exists, and continuation of the status quo (of gradual increases in the controlled prices). The results are dramatic. Under the deregulation alternative, the production shortage would be eliminated in four to five years. This result *could not* be achieved by continuation of the current policy of small controlled price increases. Moreover, the "more regulation" alternative would increase the size of the annual shortage from the current level of 3 trillion cubic feet to 9 trillion cubic feet per year by 1980. Similar results were obtained by another pair of economists, Robert M. Spann of Virginia Polytechnic and Edward W. Erickson of North Carolina State University. They recommend that deregulation proceed as rapidly as possible, because "It seems better to pay this cost now rather than draw out the process of deregulation, continue to extend the shortage into the future, and run the risk of additional, administratively induced resource misallocations."

The natural gas shortage is a creature of government policy. Whether the shortage is eliminated or exacerbated will also be a matter of government policy. Thus, one acid test of a politician's sincerity regarding the energy crisis is his position on natural gas deregulation.

SOURCES

- "FPC Says Its Control of Coal-Gas Is Limited," AP (Washington), 5 September 1973.
- "The Hot Battle Over Natural Gas Controls," *BUSINESS WEEK,* 20 October 1973.
- "Alternative Regulatory Policies for Dealing with the Natural Gas Shortage," P. W. MacAvoy and R. S. Pindyck, *THE BELL JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE,* Vol. 4, No. 2, Autumn 1973.
- "Joint Costs and Separability in Oil and Gas Exploration," Robert M. Spann and Edward W. Erickson, paper presented at the Operations Research Society of America convention in San Diego, 12-14 November 1973. ◻

viewpoint

DAVID BRUDNOY

THE VOLUNTEER MILITARY: SHADES OF CHANGE

Recently we were told that Negroes are enlisting in such numbers that the U.S. Army might soon fail to reflect a "balanced" representation of the nation's populace. Shades of Mr. McGovern's quotaization schemes. Wouldn't it be horrible, simply insufferable, were the Negroes serving in Uncle Sam's forces to exceed that 13.5 per cent of the total American male population that they represent? Imagine.

One of the arguments against the volunteer army was that it would become a "mercenary" force, comprised, at the lower levels, heavily of young men anxious to make a better living than was otherwise available to them; that is, those least employable—such as young Negroes in our society—would be most prone to join the military. I was never quite able to figure out just what the main objection to this was, when the volunteer army was in the talking stages.

Were the opponents of the all-volunteer army afraid that the Negroes would seize guns and overpower white America? Were they worried that if, horror of horrors, the army didn't exactly equate, in racial percentages, the population at large, a great thunderbolt would descent from Him, Upstairs, and strike us all dead? Or, perhaps, were they more realistically concerned about increased racial strife within the military itself?

Lt. Gen. Robert C. Taber makes the good point that the "Redskins have a pretty fair team and I never hear anyone discussing what the percentage of blacks are on the Redskins' football team." But that just isn't going to impress the Cassandras.

Let us not, please, be called alarmist if we observe, ever so gently, that there will be calls for a quota system for the military 'ere long. General Whatsisname will say: "Owing to the likelihood of exacerbated tensions within the enlisted ranks; given, also, of course, the continuation of the present trend toward heavier black enlistment than is deemed, at the general staff level, in the best interest of the enlisted ranks: we would recommend that incentives be arranged to heighten the interest in enlistment among Caucasians, and, failing that, that a Percentages Authority be established to bring about the desired levels of enlistment of the various racial groups." Or something like that.

At bottom, most likely, there is a rather strong dose of racialism in the arguments of those protesting the increased Negro enrollment. Seems to me as if they are expressing a genuine (if misguided) fear about Negro loyalty, or at least about Negro willingness to play the game according to military rules. One would think that the proper way to handle difficulties within the ranks is to dismiss the trouble-makers, of whatever race, from the service. But not to fret, in advance, lest Negroes somehow become a problem.

In addition, I wonder if there isn't a latent anti-free market bias implicit in the attitudes of those worrying about this trend toward higher Negro enlistment than heretofore. Assume, as we may, that most people act at least somewhat rationally, and that if the volunteer army, with its better pay than previously, is a more attractive alternative for a young Negro male than some other job or no job at all, then a rational action for such a person might well be enlistment in the military. There he could learn a useful trade, get some bearings, be paid for his education,

and, as they say, see the world—or at least Fort Sam Houston in San Antone.

What, in short, is wrong with that? Why shouldn't Negro males enlist in the military as good sense might dictate? Sure there will be problems; the American melting pot has yet to melt. Sure, those problems, and the very fact of higher Negro enlistment than white enlistment, point up the economic inequities within our society. But the answer, if answer there be, is not quotas on Negroes in the military, but rather a whole complex of economic reforms, in a libertarian free-market direction, that would make more likely the chances of Negro advancement economically. For the moment, if the choice is no job or a job in uniform, the wise young male, Negro or whatever, may well decide to sign up.

David Brudnoy teaches at Harvard's Institute of Politics, Boston College and the University of Rhode Island. Dr. Brudnoy's viewpoint appears in this column every third month, alternating with the viewpoints of Murray Rothbard and Tibor Machan.

THE LADY OF KASA

It well may be that I
Deserve your scorn and hate . . .
But the flowering tree at my gate,
How can you pass it by?

Hitomaro

frontlines

□ **THE FREE WOMAN'S SEMINAR**
Libertarians have frequently ignored issues and movements dealing with civil liberties and human freedom. The result so far has been that the left has, by default, become largely identified with such inherently libertarian issues as women's liberation, marijuana legalization, gay liberation, civil rights, the free-school movement, Indian rights, etc. Hopefully, libertarians' attitudes are changing: the **Libertarian Party of Kentucky** recently became the first libertarian organization to devote an entire conference to the issue of women's liberation. Conference organizer **Sue Brown** reports for *Frontlines:*

The Free Woman's Seminar, sponsored by the **Libertarian Party of Kentucky** on November 24, 1973 in Louisville, managed to be a success despite a Thanksgiving parade which cut off access to Stouffer's, rainy weather, the holiday weekend, and a smaller attendance than expected (approximately 50 persons—men and women—fought the difficulties to attend; 100 tickets were sold altogether). Although the majority of the people attending were nonlibertarians, LP people from Ohio and Illinois were present.

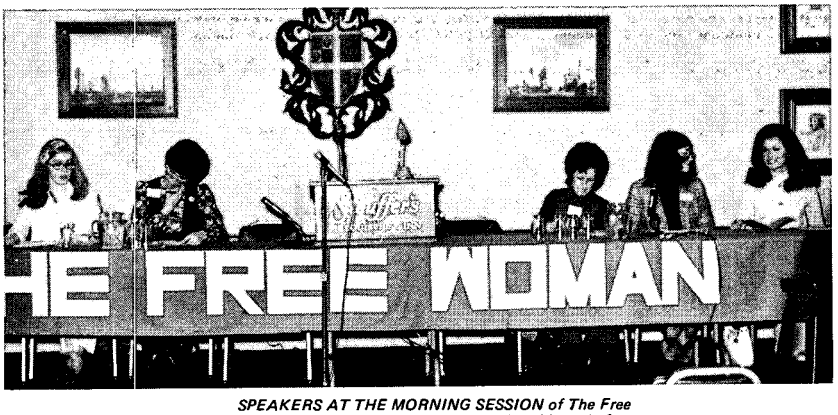
The program consisted of a morning session—theme, "The Free Woman and the Free Society"—with **Susan Brown** (LPK chairman), **Bobbi Jahn** (biologist and company manager), **Kay McAlpine** (economics analyst at Ford Motor Co.), **Sharon Presley** (psychologist), **Lyda Lewis** (Miss Kentucky 1973), and **Tonie Nathan** (LP vice-presidential candidate) each giving talks in her specific areas of interest. A lot of good ideas about how women could achieve their goals without resorting to the use of force came out of this session.

Kay McAlpine mentioned, among other things, that large companies might consider establishing day care facilities on a payroll deduction plan and emphasized that often men have the same problems as women in this area if they are widowed or have custody of their children after a divorce. She also mentioned some of the "good" things about working for a large company such as Ford, and attacked some of the myths of the Social Security System, pointing out not only its discriminatory treatment of women, but its ineptitude as a whole. Sharon Presley made some excellent points, paralleling the nonauthoritarian personal relationships which women are seeking with a nonauthoritarian political system. She emphasized the danger of allowing government to dominate our lives and specifically mentioned the danger in supporting government-financed daycare centers (the government system of compulsory education is a breeding ground for such horrors as a forced drug program for hyperactive children). Tonie Nathan dealt with the difference between "liberation", "freedom", and "independence", relating the history of her very liberated mother and her own discovery of independence.

Highlighting the afternoon session was a panel discussion by local women journalists; a lecture and demonstration of Korean Karate by Martin and Bobbi Jahn; a panel discussion on romantic relationships; and workshops on money and investment, romantic relationships, and how government works.

The Romantic Relationships panel and workshop were the most largely attended events of the day with discussion centered around establishing individual autonomy in relationships between people on an intimate level.

The nonlibertarians that attended the seminar seemed pleasantly surprised that so many relevant issues of the women's liberation movement had solutions that they had not previously considered—the compliments were unanimously positive.



SPEAKERS AT THE MORNING SESSION of The Free Woman's Seminar prepare to present their ideas. Left to right are Sharon Presley, Bobbi Jahn, Tonie Nathan, Kay McAlpine and Lyda Lewis.

TONIE NATHAN, the first woman in history to receive an electoral college vote as LP 1972 vice-presidential candidate, makes the distinction between "liberation", "freedom" and "independence".

As usual, the libertarians just enjoyed having an excuse to get together and discuss ideas.

The news media gave the event excellent coverage both before and after the seminar was held. The *LOUISVILLE TIMES* (daily) did a feature article on the LPK and the seminar, *THE COURIER-JOURNAL* ran a detailed announcement too. Nathan and Presley appeared on two television shows the Friday before the seminar, and Ms. Nathan did three radio interviews. Two television stations (WAVE, an NBC affiliate, and WKLY, an ABC affiliate) covered the actual seminar. WAVE ended its coverage of the event with the very statement: "The Free Woman's Seminar: a concept way ahead of its time, or too late." Anyone for next year?

□ **SIL EAST COAST CONFERENCE**
Frontlines correspondent, SIL director **Dave Walter,** reports:

On Saturday, November 17th, 160 libertarians gathered at Drexel University in Philadelphia for **Society for Individual Liberty's** annual **Fall East Coast Conference,** with the theme "Toward a New Liberty." A variety of talks and seminars were held, giving something of interest to virtually every libertarian who attended.

Dr. Murray N. Rothbard, honorary chairman of SIL's Academic Advisory Board, led off the conference with an in-depth analysis of the shortage-prone U.S. economy and the governmental interference that led to it. Rothbard observed that many people attribute inflation to greedy businessmen, but he wondered why there was a "quantum leap" in greed in just the last few years if this were true! He rejected rationing of short supply

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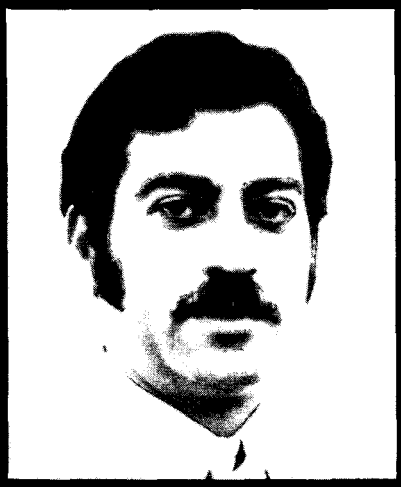

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Murray Rothbard discusses the gasoline crisis.

items, of course, in favor of free market pricing policies. Dr. Rothbard noted that some 15% of gas rationing coupons in WW II were counterfeited and suggested that such a black market operation might spring up if rationing is again imposed.

A short discussion, led by **Don Ernsberger,** SIL director, followed in which the merits of impeachment of President Nixon were discussed. It was generally agreed that libertarians should not seek impeachment because, with Nixon in office, he is basically powerless and cynicism for government and politicians can be further aggravated.

Fran Youngstein, New York Free Libertarian Party candidate for Mayor, gave a report on the recently concluded FLP mayoralty campaign. FLP gathered around 9,000 votes, or more than the four other minority parties combined. Youngstein expressed her appreciation for the financial aid libertarians sent in from all over the country, and concluded that the campaign represented substantial gains in terms of publicity and new sympathizers for the libertarian cause.

After a short lunch break, "The Taxpayer's Revolt" was the focus of a presentation by **Ken Kalcheim,** chairman of the **National Tax Strike Coalition,** and **John Sotriakis,** a law student at St. John's University in New York. Kalcheim discussed the new freedom-of-information act which requires IRS to produce all information gathered on persons accused of tax crimes, and the Daly-Drexeler cases where both taxpayers failed to give any information other than name and address on their tax returns. (Daly was found guilty and placed under psychiatric observation but Drexeler was found innocent of tax evasion on Fifth Amendment grounds.) Sotriakis discussed the rights of taxpayers in IRS investigations.

SIL then presented an award, in absentia, to controversial Philadelphia contractor **Leon Altemose** [see "Union Terror in the Building Trades," *REASON,* October 1972]. Altemose has gained national notoriety through construction union attacks on his construction sites that have done over $400,000 damage. Altemose has been fighting the union coercion and has earned the undying hate of their leaders. His lawyer advised him to avoid attending the conference to receive his award because of a new outbreak of site bombings during the preceding week.

Dr. Dom Armentano, economics professor at the University of Hartford and author of *THE MYTHS OF ANTITRUST,* made his first appearance at a libertarian conference. He discussed the growth of the petroleum industry and attempts to regulate oil and gas production which have led to monopoly laws causing more harm than good. He discussed the two views of business that libertarians hold: the Objectivist view that businessmen are always being set upon by government and the Revisionist view that businessmen are always running to government for help. Dr. Armentano feels that the truth is somewhere in between and that businessmen are basically interested in making a profit at whatever cost to free enterprise principles.

New York City mayoral candidate Fran Youngstein addresses the SIL convention.

After a break for afternoon seminars on a variety of topics, the conference reconvened with a "Crime without Victims" panel consisting of: **Gary Greenberg,** former Queens Country assistant District Attorney; **Byrna Aronson,** administrative assistant with the Greater Philadelphia American Civil Liberties Union; and **Jarret Wollstein,** former *INDIVIDUALIST* editor. They discussed everything from marijuana legalization to freedom of speech to sex laws during the hour.

The conference ended with Dr. Rothbard giving "The Case for Optimism". He sees the growth of the libertarian movement and such groups as SIL, Libertarian Party, and *REASON* magazine as evidence that, while things may get worse, the cause of freedom has a much brighter future than he would have thought ten years ago.

With the success of the conference and the enthusiasm expressed by the attendees, SIL is planning to re-institute the annual Spring conference and will try to hold conferences in other regions of the country.

□ NOTES

The Executive Committee of the national **Libertarian Party** met over the Thanksgiving weekend in Denver. Most of the meeting was devoted to business detail and budget planning. Treasurer **Pipp Boyls** reported on the numerous proposals currently before Congress which would "reform" campaign spending. It is possible that the LP and other minor parties could be seriously impeded in their efforts to raise campaign financing. This comes (coincidentally) at a time when there is a growing interest in the idea of a third party movement. The Excom indicated it will seek redress in the courts if an unfavorable bill is adopted. . . . **Ed Clark** and **Bill Westmiller** were elected by the national Excom to be Chairmen of the Platform and Constitution and By-Laws committees, respectively. **Bob Meier** of Chicago was chosen to head the national LP fund raising efforts. . . . The **Texas Libertarian Party** will host the 1974 National Convention in Dallas next June. Most state parties will be having conventions of their own during the next several months at which delegates to the Dallas gathering will be selected. . . . The largest of the state LP parties, **California,** will be holding its second annual convention on February 16-18, 1974, at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. Speakers will include **Roger MacBride, John Hospers,** and **Antony Sutton.** For further information write to: **Kathy Merrick,** P.O. Box 1203, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. . . . The **LP of Washington State** will hold its annual convention January 26-27, 1974, at the Century House Motor Hotel in Seattle. Speakers will include **Roger MacBride, Tonie Nathan,** and **John Hospers.** For further information write to P.O. Box 297, Granite Falls, WA 98252. . . . The **Louisiana LP** will hold its convention in New Orleans January 19-20, 1974. **John Hospers** will be a speaker. For further information write to: **Jerry Millett,** P.O. Box 2932, Lafayette, LA 70501. . . . **Rampart College** is sponsoring a seminar conducted by **Harry Browne** on *You Can Profit From A Monetary Crisis* in Chicago (January 26), New York (February 2), Dallas (February 9), San Francisco (February 16), and Denver (February 23). For information contact Rampart College, Box 11407, Santa Ana, CA 92711. . . . □

Hans Kreider Flees Europe!

The Year 1873 - Hans Kreider, German Craftsman, flees to America to escape the death of freedom in his homeland.
The Year 1973 - Hank Kreider, Hans' great grandson, and a skilled machinist ponders the fate of freedom in America.

Hank's recent raise in pay was declared excessive by the Cost of Living Council while the food he eats grows more expensive. This is a result of government agriculture controls and treasury department tampering with the money supply.

Last year Hank paid out a total of 38% of his income in federal, state and local taxes to support programs that waste billions of dollars a year.

A neighborhood movie theatre was closed down last week for showing an allegedly obscene movie. Also, a local radio station in Hank's country lost its broadcasting license for urging resistance to the compulsory census.

Hank's brother was drafted and died in Vietnam fighting a senseless war while over half of Hank's tax money continues to go to support a wasteful military establishment and subsidize ineffective defense corporations.

Several days ago another Federal Narc drug raid resulted in the wrong people being awakened in the middle of the night with federal officers breaking down their door, while other police were out getting their kicks hassling homosexuals, prostitutes and gamblers.

- **THAT'S BIG GOVERNMENT**
- **THAT'S HIGH TAXES**
- **THAT'S CENSORSHIP**
- **THAT'S MILITARISM**
- **THAT'S OPPRESSION**

There are individuals who are fighting these problems - through education, through political action, and through resistance. Society for Individual Liberty works for a free society. Big Government, High Taxes, Censorship, Militarism, Oppression - that's what Hans Kreider fled and that's what we have today.

What's happened to the American Dream?

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publisher's notes

• **DANISH ANTITAX PARTY SCORES:** In a general election held on December 4, the big "winner" with an amazing 15.6% of the vote was the Progress Party—a new libertarian-oriented antitax party led by tax attorney Mogens Glistrup (see "Trends," June 1973 and "Foreign Correspondent," October 1973). Glistrup, who wants to abolish or drastically limit the income tax, has stated: "Only fools pay income tax. There is no bigger crime against society than paying income tax." His Progress Party received nearly 500,000 of 3 million votes cast—in Denmark's largest voter turnout in 30 years—making it the country's second largest party in the Danish Parliament (28 out of 179 seats). The big loser in the election was the long time dominant Social Democratic Party, which dropped to 26% of the vote and will hold only 46 instead of 70 seats in Parliament. Representatives of four other new parties were also elected, in a smashing repudiation of Denmark's five established political parties. Hopefully, the parties who put up Richard Nixon and George McGovern (what a choice!) in the United States in 1972 are next in line for voter repudiation.

• **FTC POWER EXPANDED:** Environmentalists neglected to decry the effects of a controversial rider attached to the hastily-enacted Alaska pipeline bill, which gives the Federal Trade Commission unrestricted authority to compel most large United States corporations to furnish any statistical reports it deems necessary to its work. The FTC is now empowered to implement its previously proposed "line-of-business reporting program" under which it may order corporations with assets over $50 million to report their profits, advertising expenditures and R&D expenses for numerous product categories, ranging from manufacturing of food products to computers. One possible offsetting factor: if disclosure by corporations is anything like the White House's Operation Candor, there may not be too much information coming to the FTC. Hmmmmmmm . . .

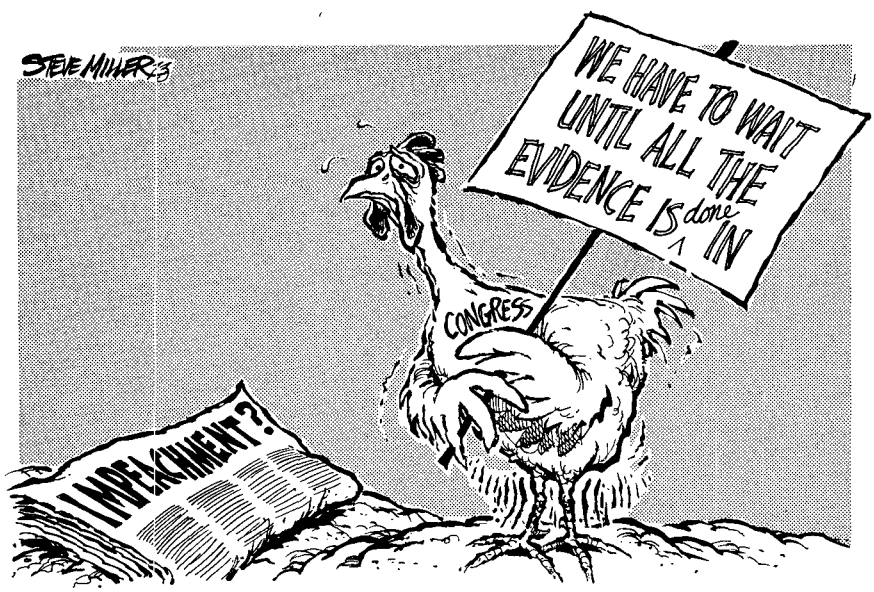
• **GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES PROLIFERATE:** According to the December 3, 1973 issue of *WASHINGTON REPORT* (published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), there has been a drastic increase in government employment over employment in the private sector. In **1900,** there were less than 1 million government employees, and there were approximately 26 persons privately employed for every civilian government worker. By **1972,** government employment had grown approximately five times as fast as private sector employment, and there were only 5.1 persons privately employed for each civilian government employee. Should this trend continue unabated, by the year **2000** there will be one government employee for every worker in the private sector.

• **AUSTRALIA CORRESPONDENT:** This month's Foreign Correspondent column marks the first appearance in our pages of our man in Australia, R. A. Howard. A mechanical engineer by profession, 24-year-old Howard received his undergraduate degree from the University of New South Wales in 1971, and is currently working on a Ph.D. thesis there on the subject of plasticity theory. He is a member of both the Australian Alliance for Individual Rights and the American Society for Individual Liberty.

• **REASON REPRINT:** Yet another *REASON* article has been reprinted. "Unmasking the 'Guilt Triangle' Theory of Inflation" by Professors Roberts, Santoni, and Van Cott (October 1973) is being reprinted in two parts in *RESEARCH REPORTS,* the weekly publication of the American Institute for Economic Research (Great Barrington, MA 01230). The Institute is a nonpolitical, noncommercial organization engaged in economic research. Its publications are generally favorable to economic freedom.

• **LIBERTARIANISM IN THE MEDIA:** Two diverse publications have recently carried articles featuring the libertarian movement. In November's *PENTHOUSE,* Samuel Blumenfeld discusses several leading libertarians and their ideas in an article entitled "Zero Government: Anarchy on the Right." And in the November 7, 1973 issue of *THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY,* there is an article by University of Kansas professor James Woelfel, "We're Not Rational Animals: A Liberal Reply to Libertarianism." Woelful admires libertarianism for its "consistency" and stirring call for individual freedom, but is critical of the idea that humans can be free and rational. Woelful hopes for a spirited response from libertarians. Copies of his article are available at 40 cents from The Christian Century Foundation, 407 Dearborn St., Chicago IL 60605, Tel. (312) 427-5380.

• **COMING NEXT MONTH:** *REASON's* March issue will be devoted to a discussion of significant current books, including David Friedman's *THE MACHINERY OF FREEDOM,* Harry Browne's *HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD,* John Rawls' *A THEORY OF JUSTICE,* Richard Taylor's *FREEDOM, ANARCHY AND THE LAW,* Duncan Williams' *TROUSERED APES,* Thomas Szasz' *THE SECOND SIN* and *THE AGE OF MADNESS,* plus soon-to-be-reissued classics, John Flynn's *AS WE GO MARCHING* and Alfred Jay Nock's *OUR ENEMY, THE STATE.* ◻



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ANTI-INFLATION AMENDMENT

To the Constitution of the United States

BOX 4691, CHICAGO 60680

SECTION 1. **The Right to Trade**

Congress shall make no law restricting the freedom of wages and prices. The right of citizens to make contracts and to trade freely among themselves shall not be abridged.

SECTION 2. **Monetary Policy**

It shall be the policy of the Treasury of the United States to stabilize the supply of cash notes and Federal credit in circulation, and thereby to preserve and increase the purchasing power of the currency of the United States.

SECTION 3. **Fiscal Policy**

On the fourth day of July in the year following the year of ratification of this article, the sixteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States shall be repealed. A levy of taxation sufficient to discharge the financial obligations of the Federal government shall be apportioned among the several States by Congress annually as the first act of each session, but the power of direct taxation shall be reserved to the several States. Congress shall not impose any tax on the property or income of citizens of the United States, nor shall any internal revenue service be maintained.

SECTION 4. **Commercial Policy**

The Government of the United States, or of any State, shall not, through any law or administrative action, prevent or forbid any person or corporation from offering for legitimate sale or from lowering the sale price of whatever goods or services may be commercially traded.

IF YOU SUPPORT THIS PROPOSAL, SEND YOUR NAME TO THE COMMITTEE

reason profile

When Joe Cobb says his major avocational commitment is to political activity he means it. His proposal for the Anti-Inflation Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ("I regard this proposal as the most basic legislative attack upon the interventionist state philosophy that libertarians can propose, short of total anarchism: to guarantee the right to trade, abolish federal taxation, and freeze the supply of Federal Reserve notes . . . ") has the active support of the Illinois Libertarian Party (of which Cobb is General Secretary) and is likely to be introduced in Congress next session. Meanwhile, Cobb is employed as the Chief Budget and Fiscal Officer of the Industrial Commission of Illinois ("it gives me an opportunity to learn a trade, to pay my rent, to keep active in the political arena, and to recover my lifetime tax payments in advance") and hopes to use his experience with government management to dismantle the bureaucracy and cut programs when (and if) libertarians are elected.

Cobb first became interested in libertarian issues in his teens and became interested in " economics as a political science -- a rational approach to policy-making when based upon a fundamental commitment to private property rights and freedom of individual choice." He received his A.B. in economics in 1966 from the University of Chicago, and is currently a part-time M.B.A. student at the University of Chicago Business School. Cobb favors an educationalist as well as a political approach to social change: he is a former editor of *NEW INDIVIDUALIST REVIEW* and has published articals in *REASON, NEW GUARD, INDIVIDUALIST, L.A. FREE PRESS, LIBERTARIAN FORUM,* and various newsletters.

His other interests include traveling, skiing, horseback riding, and folk dancing, and he plans to take up flying or skydiving before he's 35. His favorite authors include Mises (*SOCIALISM*), Friedman (*CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM, PRICE THEORY*), Hayek (*CONSTITUTION OF LIBERTY*), Bastiat (*THE LAW*), Mill (*ON LIBERTY*), Phillip Roth, Robert Heinlein, Poul Anderson, C.S. Lewis, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

JOE COBB

letters

SUPERIOR POETRY

You publish in the article "Art vs. the State" [August 1973] the incomparable poem "lighght" by A. Saroyan. On reading it and by sudden inspiration there has come to me another one, of like meter and imminent beauty, but far superior in other respects. I say this without any shame or sham modesty which would ill become a person of progressive mind. My poem goes like this: "Shiiiiiiiiit". As you can see it is not only considerably longer than that of my esteemed colleague, but also much more meaningful. Indeed while the imperialist inmates of your benighted country manage obviously very well without lighght, who can do without the bodily function I allude to ? Least of all a progressive mind which deprived of his chief means of self-expression would suffer utter frustration and perhaps even, Freud forbid, alienation. So I reckon [if Saroyan received $750 in tax money for "lighght,"] my poem is worth at least $751—where do I cash in?

Juan G. Loewenstein
Denia, Spain

TAKING GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY

I enjoyed your interview with Poul Anderson [October 1973] ; when I used to read science fiction I liked much of his stuff. I was amused to read on your inside front cover an ad for a book called *THE DISASTER LOBBY,* with endorsements from the heads of two of our giant corporations and one (I believe) advertising agency. I know that the ad does not mean that you endorse the book, but I think it is significant that corporation heads should expect to find among your readers potential (or actual) converts to the belief that these corporations should be able to do whatever they want, at whatever cost to the earth and the living creatures on it.

And it reminds me of a book that Anderson (with Frederick Pohl) wrote some twenty-five years or so ago. It was called *GRAVY PLANET,* and was a perfect and terrifying picture of what a "libertarian," contract state might well turn out to be. Society was in fact governed, and utterly ruthlessly, by the private armies and police forces of giant corporations, and the worst crime of all was to be a Consie (conservationist). The book was later printed in paperback under the title *THE PLANET MERCHANTS.* I strongly recommend it to you and your readers—only skip the contrived happy ending, if we lay waste the Earth, Venus is not going to save us.

I hope you will take strongly to heart Anderson's very sensible remark that anarchism (as you describe it) is a nice idea as long as only nice people are involved. It exposes a serious point, one which hardly any of the contributors to *REASON* ever mention, or give any reason to believe they have even thought about, that power and force are an inherent and ancient reality in human affairs. The control, distribution, and legitimization of power and force has been a central human problem for as long as men have lived together. As someone (Lenin?) once put it, "Who Whom?" Who gets to do what to whom? Everything I have read in *REASON* gives the impression that you think the problem is artificial and unimportant, that power is an invention of governments, and that all we have to do is get rid of law

and government and all coercion and force will come to an end. One does not have to be a disciple of an Ardrey or Lorenz (I am not) to believe that this is a very simple-minded view. When the big kid in the schoolyard or street threatens to beat up the little kid, and takes his lunch money away from him, you *have* power, you *have* government, you have all the raw materials of history right there in front of you. What are you going to do about it? When the racketeer says to the storeowner that if he doesn't pay protection money he is going to have a mysterious fire, and that if he talks to anyone else about it he is going to have a mysterious and fatal accident, government springs into being. The question then is, not should there be government, for there *is,* not should there be force and power, for there *is,* but how is that government to be made less arbitrary, greedy, and tyrannical, how are that force and power to be more justly distributed and controlled.

Until you begin to take such questions seriously I suspect most freedom-loving people will not take you very seriously. Indeed, many of them may see you, as I tend to, as rather innocent apologists for rich and powerful people who do not believe in freedom at all—except for themselves and their friends. (If you want to see Ford's vision of human life, just step inside a Ford plant.) Still, even though you treat them shallowly, the questions you raise are important, and it may be that you are stimulating some people, somewhere, to think about them deeply. At least, I hope so.

John Holt
Boston, MA

[Ed.] John Holt is the author of a number of books on education, including HOW CHILDREN FAIL and HOW CHILDREN LEARN.

LIBERTARIANIZING ALASKA

Can you see the U.S. giving up Alaska to a mere 300,000-minus secessionists [as considered in "Trends," September 1973 and "Letters" November 1973]? The U.S. would send an army that size to get the oil most Americans think they deserve after having been frustrated by environmentalists for so long. This would be a popular war for the U.S., not a Vietnam.

Have you heard of Libertarians with the kind of physical courage this would take? Most "Minervans" were evidently so frightened of fighting with Tongans that the "Minervans" forfeited their moral and intellectual courage. (If asking the U.N. World Court, an intellectually and morally bankrupt body, to decide the Minervan

IN GOLD I TRUST

In the beginning, Americans stole from each other, each hoping to steal more than was stolen. As long as the numbers were few, the system worked. But something for nothing does not long remain unnoticed. It got to the point where more people experienced a net deficit of stolen goods than had a net surplus of same.
The system collapsed.
Frustration...
Indignation...!
WE DEMAND OUR RIGHTS!!!
Then, a few discovered that they could steal from the unborn Americans and the not yet living could not steal back.
Oh...this was great! No resistance, you see.
And the line began to form... We want a free house...We want free food...We want a protected job...
People scrambled over each other to be first in line...We want free medical care...We want to be taken care of by...We don't want to know by whom!
But we do want a free education for our children, then they can't say we didn't provide for them ...We deserve a monument... free.
And...I want to kill. Because, you see, they also steal from the young; from the young of years —they steal years; from the young of spirit — they steal dreams. In this society, to be young of years and spirit, is to be double damned.
But, soon, the link to the future began to weaken, the system shuddered. An additional victim had to be found.
Un-American?
Yes. Excellent. We'll steal from un-American.
From now on, we'll exchange our promises for their deeds. But, un-American is not unborn. Soon, un-American began to question the promises that consumed their deeds.
The International Monetary Crisis.
The monetary crisis? What is it? It is a symptom. Then...what is the disease?
Well, show me a person who knows and acts accordingly, that he, or she cannot consume more than he, or she produces — neither in matter nor in spirit — and I will show you where that disease is not.
You will be looking for a long, long time.

IN GOLD I TRUST...an examination of the monetary crisis, and the impending crash.

The monetary crisis revolves around the purchasing power of the dollar. What gives purchasing power to the dollar? — the wealth produced in the U.S.? — the gold at Ft. Knox? What is their relationship? What happens if the former decreases? Learn why this is inevitable and why every producing asset in the U.S. will lose, on the average, 20-30% of its net worth...or 60-70% if the U.S. government survives. Which it won't...and why.

Would the monetary crisis disappear if the U.S. were to experience a balance of trade surplus? Learn why this would be one of the final steps toward total disaster.

* * * * *

For those who find themselves in a society that they find repulsive, discover the one simple ingredient that makes it possible and learn how to withdraw yourself from that society and live whatever life you have ever wanted. I am not offering an idyllic, effortless, or thoughtless existence, but one where achievement, beauty and integrity cannot be avoided if one is to survive: a limitless life. It is amazingly simple...even Ayn Rand failed to grasp it. The means of escape has been utilized hundreds of times by hundreds of millions of people (but went nowhere) and just as many times — it has been blackened from history by the powers that be.

Learn how to stop worrying about the impending crash and give yourself more time for the building of your own life.

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issue wasn't immoral, then I don't know what is.)

If after the unlikely event of Alaska being victorious over the U.S., then all you have to worry about is your next door neighbor, the Soviet Union. It seems to think Alaska was stolen from it. What were Finland's casualties when it defended itself against Russia? You won't get any support from last week's enemy, the U.S. And Canada becomes more Socialist every day.

The American Revolutionaries had all kinds of free enterprisers on their side to back them up. Who do you have? The anti-free enterprise oil cartels. (Read J. Paul Getty's negative attitudes on free economics).

If Ayn Rand was wrong when she said it's not time for political action yet, then she was at least right about one extension of political action: war. There are no warriors. When I see an Objectivist Patton interviewed by *REASON* I'll know the draw bridge has been lowered from the Ivory Tower. Until then one can continue to enjoy such sinking-concretes as *Golden Opportunity* in your November issue.

Lawrence Blair
San Francisco, CA

RESPONSE TO RAND'S LP VIEW

On October 21st, Ayn Rand gave her annual address from Ford Hall Forum.

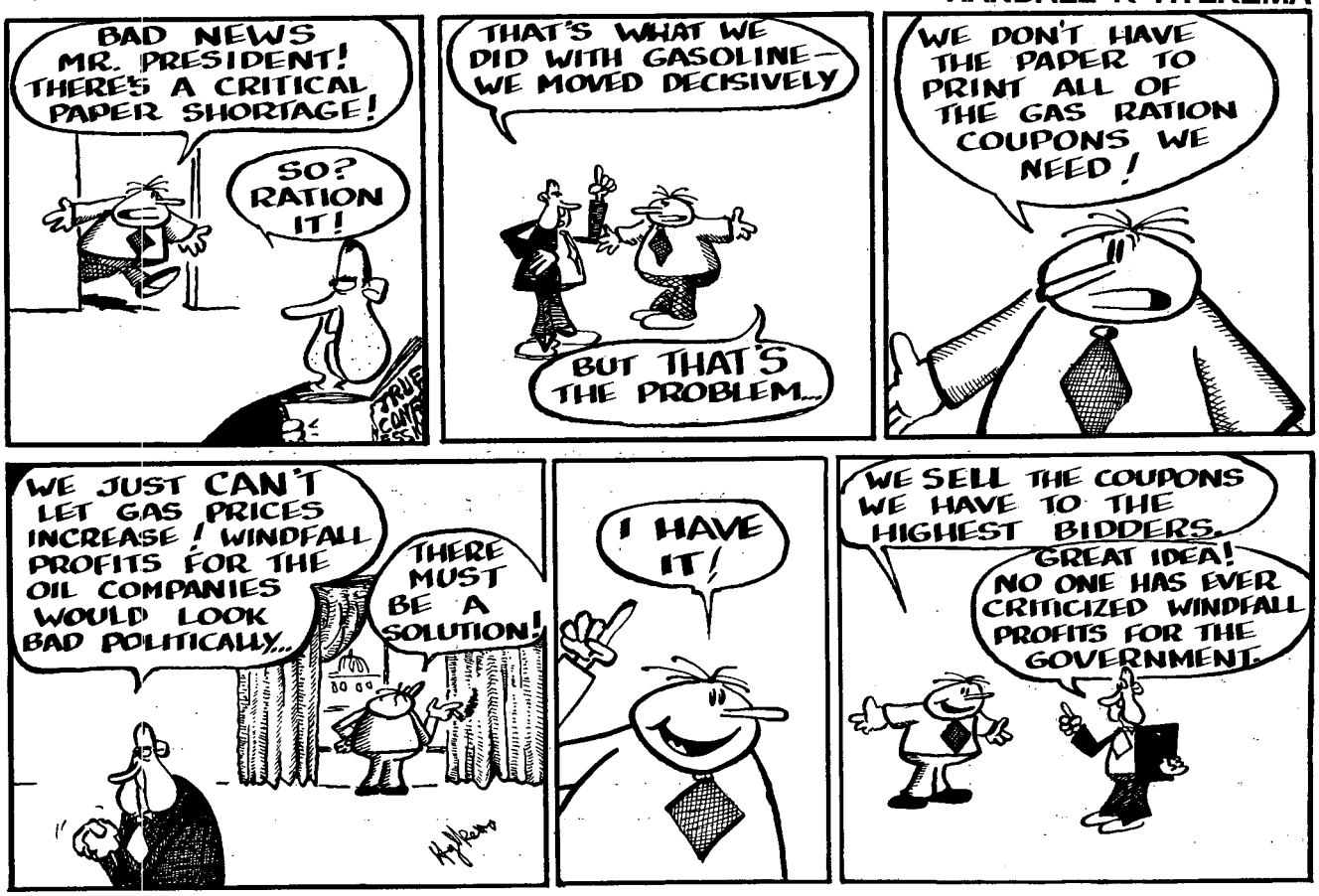
In response to a question from the floor "What is your opinion of the Libertarian Party?", Miss Rand made some comments which I shall here paraphrase. She referred to them as "political amateurs seeking publicity" and as having "half baked and borrowed ideas" with the implication that the "borrowed" ideas were borrowed from her. She gave as her only apparent reason for the inappropriateness of "political amateurs" in the political arena the fact that other alleged political amateurs had caused and compounded the Watergate fiasco.

Her remarks met with less than enthusiastic response from the audience; as compared with some of her other remarks; which leads me to believe that perhaps many of her admirers present also have a sympathy with, or are members of the LP. . . .

. . .I offer the following advice to possibly offended members of the LP. (1) Remember that Ayn Rand is a person (not a goddess pronouncing judgment) and has personal opinions apart from her philosophical position. (2) "Borrowed ideas" are not a crime. If Miss Rand does not want her ideas "borrowed" then how can they ever be implemented? Her ideas as propounded in her philosophy are facts–the facts needed for man to deal with other men and the universe–as she sees them. Facts per se cannot be copyrighted or patented and when one knows a fact it is usually best to spread that knowledge in opposition to prevailing error. (3) Continue to give philosophical and intellectual credit to Miss Rand when credit (or honor) is due; just as you do Rothbard, Von Mises, and others. (4) Disregard Miss Rand's opinion of your other "half baked" ideas. Because of its short time of existence, the organized libertarian movement still has growing to do; but it has sound intellectual and academic support; and proper application of your sound philosophical principles will follow. (5) Disregard Miss Rand's opinion of you as seeking publicity. The publicity you seek seems to be for your ideas, not for your faces. (6) Disregard Miss Rand's opinion

rudebarbs

RANDALL K HYLKEMA


BAD NEWS MR. PRESIDENT! THERE'S A CRITICAL PAPER SHORTAGE!
SO? RATION IT!
THAT'S WHAT WE DID WITH GASOLINE— WE MOVED DECISIVELY
BUT THAT'S THE PROBLEM...
WE DON'T HAVE THE PAPER TO PRINT ALL OF THE GAS RATION COUPONS WE NEED!
WE JUST CAN'T LET GAS PRICES INCREASE! WINDFALL PROFITS FOR THE OIL COMPANIES WOULD LOOK BAD POLITICALLY...
THERE MUST BE A SOLUTION!
I HAVE IT!
WE SELL THE COUPONS WE HAVE TO THE HIGHEST BIDDERS.
GREAT IDEA! NO ONE HAS EVER CRITICIZED WINDFALL PROFITS FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

of you as political amateurs. You are, but the comparison of you to the Watergate people as an example of political amateurism is inappropriate. Miss Rand herself has stated that one shortcoming of the Watergate conspirators was a lack of principle. You, however, are the first political party in America in this century to be based on solid philosophical principle, instead of a pragmatic, shifting power base. (7) Finally, do not let Miss Rand's opinions become facts by compromising your philosophical principles for power or office. Fight and win on your terms only.

Miss Rand has previously stated her disinterest in the political (and other active) application of her concepts, so it will have to be up to you publicity-seeking, political amateurs with your half-baked and borrowed ideas to start the ball rolling.

Jim Conklin
Overland Park, KS

LIMITED GOVERNMENT

I submit that Dr. Rothbard's recent "query to our limited government friends" is intellectually dishonest. In fact, it stinks! In Viewpoint (*REASON,* Oct. '73) he asks: "Do you *still* revere our rulers? Can you *still* hold that they have superior knowledge or wisdom to make any decisions whatever?" (Rothbard's emphasis) These questions are framed to imply that advocates of limited government:

a. revere rulers;
b. hold that rulers have superior knowledge or wisdom to make any decisions whatever; and
c. in the context of his article, endorse the government of Mr. Nixon.

Rubbish! We have never held or endorsed anything of the sort. Limited governmentalists (at least the ones who support Ayn Rand's position on the matter) do not revere rulers. A government which is limited by a constitution framed in the libertarian spirit obviates such a concept. Neither I nor limited governmentalists of my acquaintance maintain that rulers have the knowledge or wisdom to which Dr. Rothbard refers. Similarly, I cannot imagine any one of us endorsing Mr. Nixon's administration as has been implied.

I am well aware of the differences between the advocates of limited government and the anarchists but it is not my purpose to argue them here. It is my purpose to denounce attitudes unfairly ascribed to us by Dr. Rothbard—attitudes more appropriate to the worshippers of monarchy. Furthermore, I suspect that Dr. Rothbard is well aware that he is exaggerating. It is package-dealing of a sort to equate the limited governmentalists with power worshippers. The notion is ridiculous.

The setting up and knocking down of straw men is unworthy for one of Dr. Rothbard's reputation. He is only harming his cause. I respectfully suggest, therefore, that he stick to the subject he knows best: economics. It would be a shame indeed if his columns came to resemble those of, say, Dr. Paul Samuelson.

R. Wm. Donaldson
Calgary, Alberta

MORE ON ANARCHOCAPITALISM

Dr. Machan's writings dealing with anarchism ("Viewpoint," December *REASON*) often give me the impression that he has never read the writings of anarchists very carefully. For example, he regards the principle of consensual delegation of authority, especially in matters of defense, as a mitigation of anarchism. Now, the writings of classical anarchists– Kropotkin, Spooner, Stirner, and Tucker, for example –as well as of modern anarchists like Rothbard or various contributors to the *LIBERTARIAN CONNECTION,* all express a very different view. The view of

The Libertarian Party of California

1974

CONVENTION

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these writers is that anarchism should be defined as a rejection of *ultimate* authority. It is not unanarchistic, in their view, to let another person take control over some aspect of your life by mutual consent (though failure to retain the right or power to revoke this control is a mistake, in their view). What *is* unanarchistic is the willingness to accept claims to hold such authority without one's consent.

Thus, anarchists would not call Machan's hypothetical 'government' a government. The reason is that it is not a coercive monopoly, the only kind of monopoly that deserves the name or the implied contrast with competitive organizations. Machan's government remains in competition with all the *potential* 'governments' that might replace it, were it to become inefficient or destructive. If Machan wants to use the word government to include such an organization, this is his privilege; but I don't see that it has any differences I would consider crucial from other, nongovernmental legal agencies.

Indeed, I wonder about Machan's intent. If he is careful to divorce a legitimate, voluntary arrangement for defense from all other such arrangements, which differ only by there being several institutions available rather than just one, and to integrate it with clearly coercive organizations such as the U.S. government, one may ask *why?* This equation, after all, is no more valid than is the equation of possession of a dominant share of the market with monopoly. I am tempted to wonder if Machan is trying to rationalize some remaining loyalty to the existing government, by linking it with a libertarian and anarchistic organization to which he has chosen also to apply the name 'government'. If not, then I don't see at all what the point is, and would appreciate its being explained.

William H. Stoddard
San Diego, CA

DR. MACHAN replies: I was addressing myself to Rothbardian anarcho-capitalists, i.e., those who argue for anarchism with a legal system. They do not reject authority—and certainly those who argue for government along lines similar to mine (e.g., Rand, Branden, *et al.*) do not appear to embrace anything like "ultimate authority," whatever that means (just standing there, not saying authority to do what, etc.). The current supporter of anarchism on grounds that it prevents the delegation of authority is Robert Paul Wolff, not Rothbard, *et al.* Wolff, in turn, opposes capitalism, private property, and all that goes with anarcho-capitalism. It seems that Stoddard, not my short paper (which was certainly not meant to be exhaustive), is confused on anarchism. As to the term "government," it does not mean "coercive monopoly," since coercive monopolies logically presuppose governments. Governments are monopolies only in the sense that within some area they are authorized to use force while others are not—no different from the sense in which I am a monopolist on my own property concerning who comes in and who does not (from those who want to). Stoddard denies me the logical right to call the system I argue for a system with a government. But by his grounds I can deny anyone the right to call an open marriage (a good marriage) a marriage, a good man a man, or a perfect bowling score a score—just because these are all very rare indeed. But even broken chairs are chairs, and rotten apples apples, junk cars cars. So just because most governments fail to live up to the standards appropriate to human institutions (nonaggressive), they do not fail to be governments—or vice versa. Stoddard's advice exhibits an empiricism about the meaningfulness of concepts I do not consider valid. Finally, I resent and it in fact is wrong that Stoddard questions my integrity and motivation when he has no evidence for doing so.

JUSTIFICATION FOR TARIFFS

In your editorial on Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn (Dec. 1973), I was disappointed by your reluctance to discuss "the issue of whether the U.S. government is justified in not reducing tariffs on Soviet goods unless free emigration is permitted." I believe the issue deserves discussion, especially since those who support the Soviets on this issue often misrepresent themselves as advocates of free trade.

A tariff is a tax on the sale of foreign goods to an American buyer. Libertarians believe that governments should not tax (or otherwise interfere with) commercial transactions, *as long as the seller holds rightful title to the goods he sells.* A slaver, however, does not hold rightful title to goods produced by those whom he has enslaved. Slavery is a political system in which the slave is compelled, through the threat of force, to work for a particular employer. The Soviet state is the only legal employer in the Soviet Union. Under Soviet law, any person of working age who is not employed is guilty of the crime of parasitism, which is punishable by imprisonment. Any person who offers private employment to another, or who engages in private trade, is guilty of economic crimes, and may be punished by death. Thus, a Soviet citizen is compelled to work for the Soviet state as long as he remains in the Soviet Union. As long as anyone is compelled to remain in the Soviet Union against his will, the Soviet government is engaged in slavery, and can hold no rightful title to goods produced by its slaves.

As long as the Soviet government does not permit free emigration, the rightful title to any goods it might offer for sale belongs to its victims: to people currently being held in slavery, or to former slaves recently freed. It follows that one is morally entitled to seize any part of the value of such goods, in order to return it to its rightful owners. When such restitution cannot be made in cash, it may legitimately take the form of radio broadcasts beamed to Russia, help for the resettlement of recent immigrants from Russia in other countries, etc. It is my understanding that funds from selective tariffs are currently used for such purposes. Thus selective tariffs, imposed on socialist governments which do not permit free emigration, are fully justified. The imposition of such tariffs is one of the very few *moral* things our government has done in recent years.

Adam V. Reed
Department of Psychology
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR

CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM

I would like to express my thorough enjoyment with the short story in the December issue of *REASON.* The only problem is that I haven't seen my copy of *REASON* for two weeks. Whereas my *REASON* has (almost) invariably stayed at home in the past, it is now passing from one hot hand to another. The story seems to breed a particularly contagious strain of enthusiasm. Not only is the story being read and debated, but some are reading the issue from cover to cover. Who knows what *REASON* lurks in the minds of mankind? The reader do.

Alexander G. Wiggins
Pocatello, ID

Letters from readers are welcome. Each receives editorial consideration, although only a selection can be published and none individually acknowledged. They should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. Letters submitted for publication in this column should be typed, double-spaced. Send letters to REASON, P.O. Box 6151, Santa Barbara, CA 93111.

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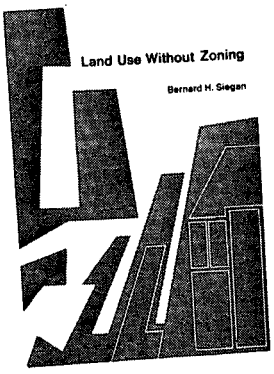

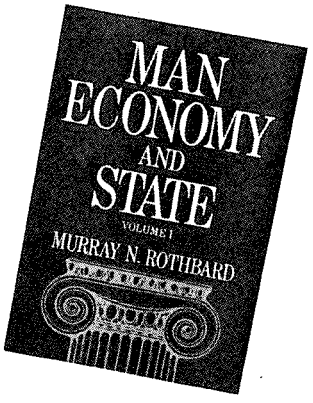

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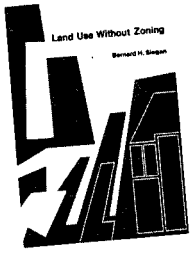

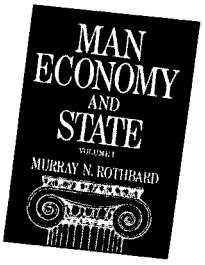

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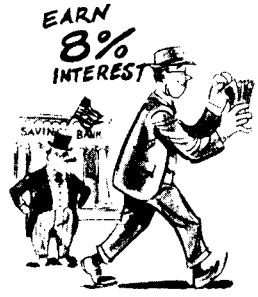

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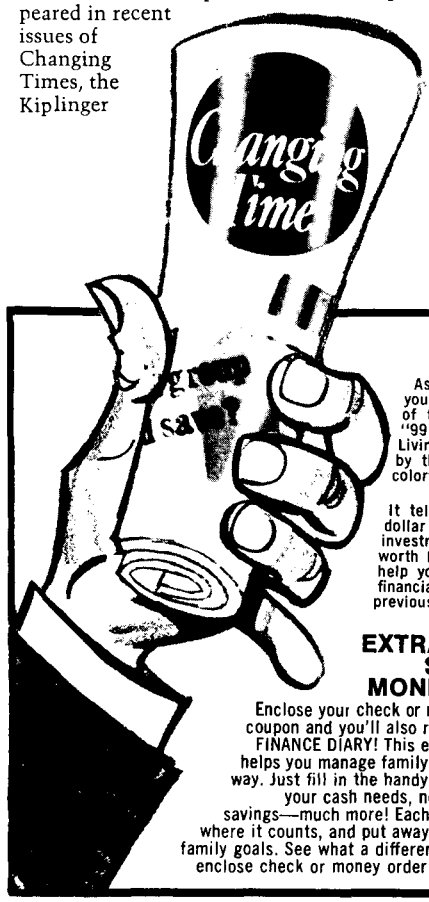

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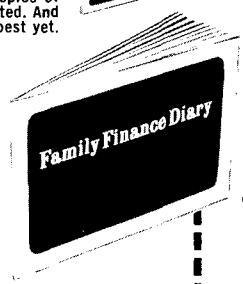

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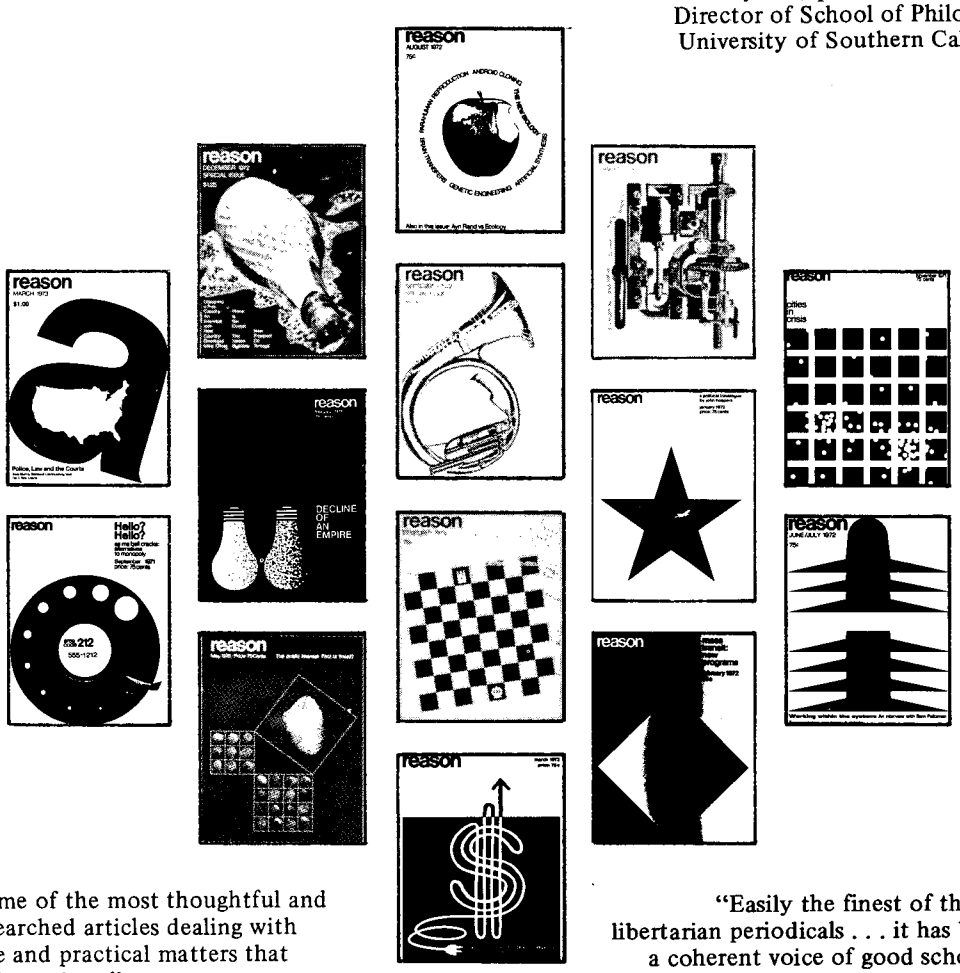

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